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Over the Line: Critical Media Technologies of the Trans-American Hyperborder

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in Comparative Literature

by

Marcel Paul Brousseau

Committee in charge:

Professor Rita Raley, Chair

Professor Carl Gutiérrez-Jones

Professor Teresa Shewry

June 2015

The dissertation of Marcel Paul Brousseau is approved.

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Carl Gutiérrez-Jones

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Teresa Shewry

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Rita Raley, Committee Chair

May 2015

Over the Line: Critical Media Technologies of the Trans-American Hyperborder

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by

Marcel Paul Brousseau



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I could recall my time as a graduate student as a chronicle of disciplinary exploration, with a beginning foray through Comparative Literature into Chicana/o Studies, Indigenous Studies, and History, a decisive move to Media Studies, a crash course in Geography, and then, with the luck of two fellowships, excursions into archival research and fieldwork at border sites beyond the academy. However, such a story would be shortsighted. Academic work is not a series of rites of passage, but rather an open-ended process of becoming inspired by people, discovering whom you trust and respect, building honest relationships, relying on others, allowing yourself to be vulnerable to appraisal and critique, and learning, ultimately, to be an ally and a collaborator in processes of communal and just knowledge. Every move I have made across disciplines was done with remarkable people serving as my guides, confidants, and brokers. All of my methodologies were developed with the aid and influence of specific persons. This project emerged from a network, a community, and a family, all at once.

First, I must thank my dissertation committee. For the last three years, they have been my audience, and have appeared in my mind's eye when I sat down to write. They will remain my audience, and I hope, my confidants and advisors, even as I move beyond UC Santa Barbara:

Teresa Shewry and I began at UCSB at the same time. From the time of my first seminar paper with her she has been a thoughtful and thorough critic. Throughout the dissertation process her comments and recommendations extended the scope of my project, helped me to reconsider my methodological assumptions, and indicated unexpected future realms of study. I am grateful to have had her guidance and her friendship for all of these years.

Carl Gutiérrez-Jones sets an example of rigor, enthusiasm, and ethical awareness that has inspired me since my first seminar with him. Over the years, he has been a mentor to me as both a teacher and as a researcher. I can always count on him to provide careful and savvy advice regarding classroom techniques, publication ideas, theoretical frameworks, and more. Carl makes joy and diligence seem like natural academic complements.

Rita Raley changed the course of my academic program, and in that sense, she changed my life. Media studies, as introduced to me by Rita, gave a central focus to the interdisciplinary work with which I was experimenting. Rita didn't only introduce me to a discipline, however. She also introduced me to a way of thinking and working that is political in its imperatives and conscientious in its methods and decision-making. Beyond that, Rita has devoted immense amounts of time and energy to reading my exams, chapters, and fellowship proposals, to discussing my academic profile, and to advising me on my path through the academy. "Let's begin with heuristics," Rita said during my first field examination with her. From that point on I became critically conscious of the mechanics of scholarship, and how methodologies and frameworks have political effects.

I must thank other scholars at UCSB, and at various institutions, who have helped me and shaped my work. Pekka Hämäläinen, at the University of Oxford, has been my envoy into the discipline of History. He has also been a wonderful reader and advisor. I am grateful to have his continuing support. Inés Talamantez has been a gracious and generous interlocutor and advisor; I have been privileged to be able to discuss Indigenous politics and culture with her over the years. Francisco Lomeli has been an invaluable advisor and guide in the field of Chicana/o Studies; his example has shaped my path through the academy in numerous ways. Thank you to Ramesh Srinivasan at UCLA, who discussed media and fieldwork with me, and introduced me to Jim Enote at Zuni Pueblo. Thank you also to Sam Truett, at the University of New Mexico, who has been a welcome historiographic correspondent. Stephanie LeMenager, at the University of Oregon, shared important sources and ideas with me that will be crucial to my future work. Wolf Kittler gave me much to think about. Elisabeth Weber inspired me as a teacher and a thinker; I am glad for her ongoing support. Cathy Nesci became chair of Comparative Literature at the right time and made everything seem possible. At Palomar College, Carlton Smith has been an influence and a great conversationalist. Also at Palomar, Richard Hishmeh, Kevin Kearney, Barb Kelber, Deborah Paes de Barros, and Rocco Versaci buoyed my spirits time and again as the end of the dissertation loomed.

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On that note, I must thank the other libraries that have made my work possible. For the last few years I have unburdened UCSB's Davidson Library and Arts Library of some 200 of their books at a single time. I have been privileged by UCSB's collections, but I am especially grateful to its ILL staff, without whom academic work as we know it would be impossible. The Geisel Library at UC San Diego was a helpful home away from home in my last year of dissertating. Also, the Palomar College Library gave me peace and quiet; an unexpectedly large portion of this dissertation was written in its cubicles.

At UCSB I must also thank my colleagues in the Comparative Literature program. Thank you as well to the Phelps Hall Administrative staff. Likewise, I must thank the American Indian and Indigenous Collective Research Focus Group (AIIC), and the English Department's Transcriptions digital humanities research center. Thank you also to Gloria Marin, who always spoke Spanish with me, despite my faltering vocabulary, and to Mario Galicia, Jr., who helped with my translations.

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Barbara Stebbins and Larry Kelp encouraged me, edited my work, discussed my ideas, and celebrated with me every step of the way. I am delighted to be part of their family.

My mother, MaryAnne Kuroczko, gave me a love for stories. My father, Brad Brousseau, gave me a love for history. Both of my parents have inspired and pushed me throughout these grad school years. My brothers, Guillaume and Matt, never take me too seriously, which is for the best.

Katie Kelp-Stebbins possesses sacred knowledge to which I have somehow been given access. Again and again I turn to her deep, fast mind, and again and again I am inspired, transformed, awed. She led me through this process. We are colleagues and companions.

Standing at *horoi*.  
The light shifts; you know the plants,  
the stories, the names.

VITA OF MARCEL PAUL BROUSSEAU  
June 2015

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Creative Writing, Purchase College, State University of New York,  
August 2005 (cum laude)

Master of Arts in Comparative Literature, University of California, Santa Barbara,  
September 2010

Doctor of Philosophy in Comparative Literature, University of California, Santa Barbara,  
June 2015 (expected)

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT

2008-12: Teaching Assistant, Comparative Literature Program, University of California,  
Santa Barbara

2013-14: Teaching Assistant, Writing Program, University of California, Santa Barbara

Summer 2013-14: Teaching Associate, Comparative Literature Program, University of  
California, Santa Barbara

Summer 2014: Teaching Associate, Writing Program, University of California, Santa  
Barbara

AWARDS

UC President's Dissertation Year Fellowship, University of California, Santa Barbara,  
2014-15

Graduate Opportunity Fellowship, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2012-13

Bancroft Library Study Award, summer stipend, UC Berkeley, 2012

Outstanding Teaching Assistant of the Year Award, Comparative Literature Program,  
University of California, Santa Barbara, 2010-11

Honorable Mention, Purchase College Humanities Prize for Poetry, 2005

Purchase College Durst Creative Writing Master Class with poets Billy Collins, Robert  
Hass, Charles Simic, and New Yorker poetry editor Alice Quinn, 2004

FIELDS OF STUDY

Studies in U.S.-Mexico borderlands literature with Professors Francisco Lomelí, Carl  
Gutiérrez-Jones, and Teresa Shewry

Studies in Indigenous media with Professors Rita Raley, Inés Talamantez, and Teresa  
Shewry

Studies in Literature and landscape theory with Professors Rita Raley, Pekka Hämäläinen,  
and Stephanie LeMenager

## ABSTRACT

Over the Line: Critical Media Technologies of the Trans-American Hyperborder

by

Marcel Paul Brousseau

My project argues that the U.S.-Mexico border is an assemblage of medial forms that are communicated in multiple media without superseding one another. For example, the border is, at once, a graphic design on numerous maps; a symbolic construction in copious literary and legal textual media; a series of fences erected in various terrestrial media; a photographic icon in still and moving pictures; an architectural design; a painted figure; the list goes on. As an assortment of medial forms, The U.S.-Mexico border does not refer to the United States and Mexico as the subjects of its mediation, but rather *produces* the United States and Mexico as subjects, which thereon depend on the border for their subjectivity, as the border depends on the nations for its continued existence. The United States and Mexico cannot be articulated from or with one another without what media theorist Bernhard Siegert calls “concrete practices and symbolic operations” to process their articulation, operations which are ultimately expressed in medial forms, whether lines on maps, untranslatable proper nouns, legal writ, poetic verses, or fences.<sup>1</sup>

In drawing connections between the borders produced in different media, I am examining borders as media systems that correspond to different cultural techniques and produce distinct political subjectivities. To envision this network, I develop the concept of the hyperborder, which I define as a border that *extends* across media. The hyperborder is a framework that links together different mediated borders, and that proposes and examines

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<sup>1</sup> Siegert, “Cacography,” 30.

epistemological connections between them. The hyperborder is a way of attaining a global and comparative view of borders, while at the same time accounting for their different and irreducible media forms. In this project, I examine border forms primarily in three media: literary media, including poetry and prose; cartographic media, with an attention to different cultural meanings of mapmaking; and infrastructural media, particularly types of fencing.

My methodology for researching and comparing these different media forms combines archival and participatory research. In order to study textual borders—those found in literary and cartographic media—I have relied on archival research carried out at UC Berkeley’s Bancroft Library and in the Special Collections of UCSB’s Davidson Library. My desire to account for the location of media has also compelled me to research media forms in the field, so to speak. My analysis of Indigenous mapping in Chapter Two is informed by conversations that I have had with Jim Enote, director of the A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center at Zuni Pueblo. My analysis of the U.S.-Mexico border fence in Chapter Three is grounded in physical fieldwork at the site of the fence, particularly with Friends of Friendship Park in San Diego and Tijuana.

My combination of archival and participatory research practices allows for a wider view of the border. It also situates my project in numerous academic disciplines and fields, including Comparative Literature, Media Studies, Border Studies, History, Chicana/o Studies, and Indigenous Studies. In developing the comparative framework of the hyperborder, I am making use of the interdisciplinary potential of Comparative Literature, albeit in a way that problematizes the discipline by including what may not be considered “literary” in my comparisons. Although originating in Comparative Literature, my methodology has wandered, through the discipline’s encyclopedic opening, into Media

Studies, where I can compare objects like those listed above through concepts like cultural techniques and knowledge systems.

I am mainly applying my Media Studies and Comparative Literature approach in order to intervene in the interdisciplinary field of Border Studies. As an academic specialization, Border Studies leans toward political and social sciences, and often leads to bureaucratic professionalization. My project complements and challenges a social sciences-oriented Border Studies with a humanities-based approach that insists on the media specificity of borders. Similarly, my project is engaged with rethinking the paradigmatic borderlands, as conceptualized by historian Herbert Eugene Bolton in the early 20th century. While my dissertation is grounded in borderlands historiography, my sense of History is directed toward a borderlands of media—toward medial differences, and how they determine boundaries in the symbolic and in the real.

A major assertion in my project is that cultural differences correlate to media operations. I thus pay critical attention to the disciplinary frameworks of Chicana/o and Latina/o Studies, and to how their disciplinary stances and social frameworks are articulated with those of History and Border Studies. While older center-periphery historiographies relegated Chicana/o cultural production to regional margins, my project marks how Chicana/o texts address these problematics in media-specific ways.

Finally, as a white, non-Indigenous scholar who examines how subjects are produced through medial borders in literature, cartography, and infrastructure, I consider it ethically important to foreground Indigenous academic frameworks for evaluating border media. In this project I evaluate Indigenous media using Indigenous intellectual traditions, and I also examine the effects of non-Indigenous theory on Indigenous cultural practice.

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## **Introduction**

### **Over the Line**

A Saturday in mid-December. Fifteen miles south of San Diego, a procession of people makes its way into the marshlands of Border Field State Park. Fall rains have washed out the park's roads; what isn't already standing water has turned to mud. The procession steps lightly around puddles and turns west down a horse trail, crosses the marsh, and continues south along the beach, toward the U.S.-Mexico border. It is heading to Friendship Park, where revelers will join on both sides of the border fence in celebrating the 21st annual Posada Sin Fronteras (Posada Without Borders), which commemorates the Biblical narrative of Mary and Joseph's search for shelter on the night of Jesus' birth. In the shadows of the border fence, the Posada celebration takes on added significance. The time-honored story of hospitality for the stranger becomes a moratorium on the rights of the immigrant, and an affirmation of friendship between the people of the United States and Mexico. For the next two hours, celebrants will sing seasonal hymns together, Catholic and Methodist greetings will be given, migrants and deportees will share testimonials, and the names of migrants who have perished in their journey over the last year will be read and tallied by the audience, with somber calls of "Presente" echoing over the borderline.

The event is choreographed specifically for the border space atop Monument Mesa, where, in 1849, the U.S.-Mexico Boundary Commission began marking the international boundary between the two nations. The marble obelisk that the commission placed atop the mesa has become a marker of time as well as of space. As the representation of the first surveyed point of the boundary, the monument indexes the Western historical technique of using prominent stones to demarcate borders, a practice dating back to the *horoi* of Greek

antiquity, if not further.<sup>1</sup> In this way, the obelisk on Monument Mesa represents the continuity of Western bordering techniques. However, as the material conditions of the U.S.-Mexico border have changed during the last century and a half, the solidity of the border marker on Monument Mesa has also become ironic, and the marker has come to represent an older paradigm of diplomacy, wherein the international border was a marked and recorded as a periphery far from national centers of power. As progressive iterations of border fencing have rematerialized the borderline, the obelisk has become a curio that no longer operationally defines the international boundary, and that is all but invisible—due to the opacity of the fencing—from the U.S. side of the line.

The narrative of the obelisk on Monument Mesa is one example of the medial assemblage that determines the political effects of the border. Each of the material media marking the national divide at Friendship Park indexes its own medial history, and produces different political subjectivities and social relationships. As the revelers of the 2014 Posada Sin Fronteras gather in Friendship Park, they constitute a binational polity that establishes itself through, over, and in relation to the borderline, the layers of border fencing, and the border obelisk, as well as to media, like security cameras and Border Patrol vehicles, that extend the border as a mobile symbol. In this medial environment, different techniques and technologies reflect and critique each other. Just as the obelisk is resignified by the fence, and just as the Posada narrative is resignified in the context of the border, so too is the border resignified by the Posada ceremony itself, and its own medial history.

The highlight of the ceremony is the singing of the Posada Song, which consists of a dialogue between St. Joseph and a Casero, or Master of the House, from whom Joseph is requesting shelter. In the tradition of the Posada Sin Fronteras, people on the Mexican side of

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<sup>1</sup> Ober, “Greek Horoi,” 91-92.

the border fence sing the role of Joseph, and those on the U.S. side of the fence sing the role of the Casero. As these assignments reflect the longstanding economic imbalance between the two nations, they inflect the shared ceremony with a symbolic imperative: A choral petition for hospitality and shelter carries from the south, or Mexican, side of the fence, through and over the material openings of the fence, to the north, or U.S. side, where it is met by the suspicion, resistance, and ultimately, humane acquiescence to the pleas of the strangers. In this restaging of the Posada narrative, the fence becomes that which it cannot be: a threshold, or a door, mediating the communication, and linking the fortunes of, people who are marked as different from one another by their relation to the border itself.

As if to reinforce the transformation of the border fence into a portal, the performance of the Posada Song at the Posada Sin Fronteras ends with a call to converge upon the fence and to touch one another through its openings. Suddenly, every available gap in the high-gauge mesh becomes a channel for fingers merging from both sides of the fence. The celebration transforms into sensory commotion: Fingers squeeze through rough steel wire until they resonate against other fingers; eyes scan the mesh to meet corresponding eyes across the wire; cheerful greetings are spoken in Spanish and English. Thereafter, the festivities end with a symbolic blowing of bubbles and improvisatory singing. As the sunlight fades, prismatic clouds of bubbles sail through and over the fence, mediating their own trails over the line.

The Posada Sin Fronteras is an exceptional event, particularly from a legal perspective. Its late-afternoon staging is only made possible through the sanction of the U.S. Border Patrol, who typically close Friendship Park at 2 PM on Saturdays and restrict gatherings on the U.S. side to twenty people or less. Additionally, stern warnings and even

arrest generally impede the Posada celebration's frenzy of transborder correspondence, particularly the touching of hands through the fence. To attend the Posada Sin Fronteras is to experience binational communion as an elusive utopia—for a few hours, the border, and its assembled medial forms become allegorical props, screens for filtering difference, symbolic barriers surmounted by symbolic affects.

Yet, I and many others would argue that border media always already are allegorical props,<sup>2</sup> at the same time that they are very real, material devices for enforcing legal restrictions, and for reifying political power. The Posada Sin Fronteras doesn't merely transform the border space at Friendship Park in the service of pageantry; it stages a political critique that indicates the extension of borders across medial forms and cultural contexts. Additionally, the interplay of borders demonstrated by the Posada Sin Fronteras shows how borders function as media that produce political subjectivity, and how the subjectivity produced by one medial border could allow for critical power over another medial border. The invocation of the symbolic threshold in the Posada Song as a correlate to the border fence enables an authoritative denunciation of anti-immigration policies and infrastructure as it also allows for a historical examination of how difference and exclusion have been, and continue to be produced through media technologies.

In this project I give the name *hyperborder* to such an extension of borders across media. I argue that national borders are hyperborders, and that the different medial forms that comprise them correspond to different cultural techniques, and produce distinct political subjectivities. Just as the Posada Song is used to draw a connection between antique and present-day medial contexts of hospitality and security, I too compare different medial forms

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<sup>2</sup> The power of borders simultaneously to be symbolic or affective media, as well as material and juridical media is central to critical work by Peter Andreas, Wendy Brown, and Rita Raley, among others.

in order to diagram the extent of bordering as a political and cultural practice. The historical context for my analysis is the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, with its comprehensive narrative of coloniality, settlement, migration, dispossession, and interchange. In what follows I primarily examine and compare the border forms of this region in three media: literature, cartography, and infrastructure. My project responds to current U.S. governmental policies of security and control in the borderlands—as referenced by the symbol and structure of the fence—but it also addresses longstanding battles for land and cultural rights waged by Indigenous peoples against settler-colonial governments in the U.S. and Mexico, and the continuing struggles of transnational migrants to cross economic and geographic borders and to negotiate networks of global capital. As my project shows, the connection between these political realities can be examined as a system of interconnected medial borders. While my term for this system—*hyperborder*—has been asserted already in another academic context, I am augmenting the term to specifically account for borders as media. An examination of the term however, and its context, provides a useful heuristic for further summarizing the nature of my project.

### **Defining and Redefining *Hyperborder***

In 2008 architect Fernando Romero, in collaboration with his firm Laboratory of Architecture (LAR), published the book *Hyperborder: The Contemporary U.S.-Mexico Border and Its Future*. Although it establishes the concept, Romero’s text only gestures toward a definition for *hyperborder*. The most exact formulation offered for the term is, “a border shaped by numerous complexities and unique levels of hyperactivity.”<sup>3</sup> This particular meaning has since traveled mostly into neoliberal discourse as an occasional buzzword in publications on international trade, capital development, and global security. In particular, John P. Sullivan, a Los Angeles Police Department lieutenant, and researcher for numerous

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<sup>3</sup> Romero, *Hyperborder*, 42.

counter-terrorism think tanks, has latched onto the term to denote the problem of “Securing...one of the most complex national boundaries in the world [against] numerous homeland security and criminal challenges.”<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, a business case published by the European School of Management and technology, and entitled “Tijuana Hyperborder Plant: An Investment Opportunity,” educates business students about an “investment opportunity” involving “different levels of complexity” and concerning “an independent power plant (IPP) in Mexico.”<sup>5</sup>

That Romero’s terminology has been deployed in this way is appropriate given the apparent origins of the term in a series of conferences about international trade held jointly in El Paso and Ciudad Juarez in 2005 and 2006. Romero was a developer of, and a keynote speaker at, the first conference, which was called “Hyperborder: The Future is Now!” Also dubbed “The First Annual North American Integration Conference,” the event was intended,

To create a forum to bring the US/Mexico border community stakeholders together with international recognized experts in order to increase awareness of the region's challenges and opportunities and outline steps to foster its growth and development.<sup>6</sup>

The second iteration of the conference was more extensively documented and further clarified the purpose of the hyperborder concept: “To create a border community focused on international trade.”<sup>7</sup> A 2006 diplomatic cable from the U.S. Embassy in Mexico to the U.S. Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, indicates that a U.S. Economics Officer from the U.S. Embassy (ECONOFF), as well as an officer from the U.S. Consulate in Ciudad Juarez

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<sup>4</sup> Sullivan, “Securing.”

<sup>5</sup> Jens Weinmann and Christoph Burger, “Tijuana hyperborder plant: An investment opportunity.” *European School of Management and Technology*. <https://www.esmt.org/tijuana-hyperborder-plant-investment-opportunity> (Accessed May 3, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> Ruben Mena to Daniel Chacon et al, “News for 11/9/05,” November 9, 2005, <http://intrabecc.cocof.org/programs/intranetnotasperiodico/uploadedFiles/11-9-05.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Gonzalez, “Hyperborder conference.”

(CONOFF) attended the second Hyperborder conference. The cable summarized the development of the hyperborder concept:

The purpose of the “Hyperborder” effort is to build a platform for improved cross-border cooperation and understanding...the “Hyperborder” concept has spurred a yearly conference of the same name. The first Hyperborder Conference took place in 2005 and primarily discussed broad themes. This year the ideas were more focused...[on] promoting a “multi-faceted” “Hyperborder” approach that promotes joint economic, social, cultural, government and academic links.<sup>8</sup>

The keynote speaker at the 2006 Hyperborder conference was U.S. Representative Silvestre Reyes (D-TX). In a subsequent newspaper column he contextualized his participation in the conference by drawing attention to a global paradigm shift in the management of international borders:

The policy debate in Washington about how to manage our international borders is more heated than ever; and since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the United States government and governments around the world have changed the way they view international borders...Here in the U.S., Congress has passed what I consider to be an ill-conceived plan to build a fence on the U.S.-Mexico border...[however] it is vitally important to continue fostering partnerships that will carry our region forward in today’s changing global economy.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> “06MEXICO6760, US-Mexico ‘Hyperborder’ Conference,” *WikiLeaks*, accessed May 3, 2015, <https://wikileaks.org/cable/2006/12/06MEXICO6760.html>. It should be noted that the writers of the cable are skeptical of the concept, due to the region’s asymmetrical national economies: “In the end, before a true Hyperborder can exist, Ciudad Juarez must resolve its basic problem of underdevelopment while the El Paso/Las Cruces border region must come up with a sustainable economic model that also complements efforts in Juarez.”

<sup>9</sup> Silvestre Reyes, “Reyes Reports,” *West Texas County Courier*, November 30, 2006, 3.

Reyes, who had been the head of the U.S. Border Patrol, and the strategist behind the inception of Operation Blockade in 1993,<sup>10</sup> went on to praise Hyperborder 2006, which he had helped to convene, for “assist[ing] established business owners, professionals and educators, and startup small businesses [to] learn more about the unique trade opportunities in the region, and how best to benefit from them.”<sup>11</sup>

As developed through the two Hyperborder conferences, the hyperborder concept is a way of describing the border region in terms of multivalent economic and political activity. Published in the wake of the conferences, Romero’s text is the sourcebook on the concept. In addition to the definition quoted above, *Hyperborder* designates the U.S.-Mexico boundary region as a “distinct international boundary for the extensive array of influences that shape its current reality.” It further defines these influences as “daily political tensions, economic disparity, hyper flows, interdependence, and more.”<sup>12</sup> The book makes clear that these local “influences” link to “global conditions.” The “hyper” of *hyperborder* is, it seems, not only a reference to “hyperactivity” or “hyper flows,” but to a contemporary overwhelming of the “traditional definition...[of] the term *border*” by global capitalism. As it moved from a context for local trade conferences to codification in Romero’s text, the hyperborder concept became a theoretical framework about the instability of global borders. Romero writes,

The traditional functions of international borders are being tested by globalization...In today’s age of global connectivity, free markets, and increased mobility, borders have become more flexible, more permeable, and more blurred.

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<sup>10</sup> This strategic initiative by the Border Patrol assigned crews of officers to physically occupy the borderline as a mode of directly discouraging and/or immediately apprehending border crossers from Mexico. Its logistical “success” paved the way for Operation Gatekeeper in the San Diego region, and, as Timothy J. Dunn puts it, inaugurated the ongoing border security policy of “prevention through deterrence.” See Dunn, *Blockading*, 1-3.

<sup>11</sup> Reyes, “Reyes Reports,” 3.

<sup>12</sup> Romero, *Hyperborder*, 46.



They are in constant transition, and the shape they take in the future will influence multiple arenas, whether political, social, economic, or cultural.<sup>13</sup>

Romero sees the hyperborder concept as a “new framework...one that embraces complexity and multilateral viewpoints yet also considers common values that connect people throughout the world.” Despite its origin in the context of local crossborder trade, the scope of the hyperborder concept is global: “Our position in this project is not pro-Mexican or pro-U.S.,” Romero writes, “but pro-development, pro-cooperation [and] beyond national interests.” With these goals in mind, Romero imagines that “progressive action” concerning the U.S.-Mexico border “has the potential to provide useful insight for how to manage borders elsewhere around the world...in the interest of development and prosperity.”<sup>14</sup>

Although Romero idealizes the hyperborder as a new framework, the skein of “complexities” that Romero and company highlight mark the hyperborder as a postmodern concept that frames the border as an indeterminate and immanent object. In the hyperborder concept, the “flexible,” “permeable,” and “blurred” U.S.-Mexico border no longer demarcates a frontier, or the outer edges of two nations, but rather operates “in constant transition” in “react[ion] to global conditions.”<sup>15</sup> Although Romero imagines that a “stance...beyond national interests” will allow the hyperborder to become a stage for progress toward “universal needs, such as quality of life for all,” it is hard not to identify this stance with the neoliberal paradigm. Likewise, it is evident that Romero and the Hyperborder conferences have developed the hyperborder concept in relation to what Marxist theorists Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have called “the ideology of corporate capital and the world market.” As Hardt and Negri emphasize, the “anti-foundational” logic of the world

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>15</sup> Romero, *Hyperborder*, 15-17.

market re-regiments national binaries into “global networks of power consisting of highly differentiated and mobile structures.”<sup>16</sup> The hyperborder concept engages this system by proposing a network of power in which a politics of difference—of “complexity and multilateral viewpoints”—is mobilized on the U.S.-Mexico border “in the interest of development and prosperity” in modes that could “potentially be utilized as models for the rest of the world.”<sup>17</sup>

In its parameters, the hyperborder concept exemplifies Hardt and Negri’s notion that “There is no more outside.” It accounts for the end of border politics as a field of dueling sovereignties and territorial lines, and recognizes a transition to border politics as a hyperactive series of “minor and internal conflicts” between actors linked by transnational commercial paradigms—NAFTA in this case.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, *Hyperborder*’s periodization cites the implementation of NAFTA as the historic gestation of the hyperborder. Romero and company decry NAFTA’s “harsh realities,” but they also imagine that there is no going back beyond the “cross-border integration” forged by the agreement, and that a future of “further integration and continued interdependence” is inevitable.<sup>19</sup> The goal that Romero and company outline in *Hyperborder* is to transform the harsh realities of the hyperborder—“daily political tensions, economic disparity, hyper flows, interdependence, and more”—into “positive [and] negative” “qualitative scenarios” for “progressive action.”<sup>20</sup>

It is not the underlying goal of this project to criticize these politico-economic dreams. An obvious structural critique levied by the U.S. diplomatic officers in attendance at

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<sup>16</sup> Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 150.

<sup>17</sup> Romero, *Hyperborder*, 16.

<sup>18</sup> Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 187.

<sup>19</sup> Romero, *Hyperborder*, 42, 95.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 46, 16, 17. The text names 11 themes for qualitative scenarios: Security, Narcotraffic and corruption, Informal sector, Migration and demographics, Education, Economic development and trade, Transportation, Energy, Environment, Health, and Urbanization.

Hyperborder 2006 chalks up the theoretical improbability of the concept to the continued transcendence of national borders:

The “Hyperborder” concept is a great idea in theory...In practice, however, the respective business communities seem primarily interested in helping themselves more than promoting comprehensive cross-border linkages. We observed that there were very few U.S. representatives at the Juarez event and few Mexican representatives at the El Paso event.<sup>21</sup>

In this subjective observation, by state actors who were able to pass freely from one national side to another, the apparent flexibility of the border remains an open question, and the hyperborder remains a speculative fiction.<sup>22</sup> The diplomats’ critique tempers the “hyperactivity” of the hyperborder somewhat, and allows for other critical readings of the hyperborder’s potential as a framework.

In his review of *Hyperborder* for the Los Angeles Times, media and border theorist Josh Kun produced a contrapuntal reading of the text by simultaneously reviewing Juan Felipe Herrera’s anthology *187 Reasons Mexicanos Can't Cross the Border: Undocuments 1971-2007*. Kun crosscuts Romero’s “border science fiction” with Herrera’s literary work from the “trenches of border art and politics” and assembles a differential history:

Herrera's take on the hyperborder has a different chronology; it goes back to the Spanish conquest of Mexico, the U.S.-Mexico war of 1846-48 and the Chicano movement of the 1960s...His poems cast the border as a story with ancient echoes,

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<sup>21</sup> “06MEXICO6760, US-Mexico ‘Hyperborder’ Conference.”

<sup>22</sup> It should be noted here that one of the conceptual strengths of *Hyperborder* is the use of fictional “future scenarios” that represent potential “qualitative scenarios” of the hyperborder. These future scenarios, which are written in the genre of news reportage, reinforce the book’s thesis of continued globalization and interdependence, e.g. “Polls Predict the Winner of 2020 Presidential Election must be pro-Latino and Speak Spanish Fluently (September 18, 2013).” As with all science fiction, part of the play of these fictional scenarios is to mark their horizon against the real.

overflowing with spilled blood (“blood in the border web, the penal colony shed, in the bilingual yard”) and erased memory (a haunting chorus of “seed-voices”).<sup>23</sup> Kun’s comparative analysis of the two works deepens the potential of the hyperborder as a framework. Although Kun himself dichotomizes “Romero’s hyperborder [with Herrera’s] human border,” his assemblage of the two writers’ resonant motifs demonstrates that *hyper* could characterize the borders delineated in both works. Certainly, there is the sense of hyper as in “hyperactive” that Romero proposes, in Herrera’s poetics, albeit with a qualitative difference: In Herrera’s lexicon, “active” becomes “activist,” and terms like “development” and “prosperity” become “transform” and “flourish.”<sup>24</sup> Where Romero and company “are hopeful that [their] study and vision will catalyze relations between two countries that share a problematic border,”<sup>25</sup> Herrera appends a “Floriscanto sound,” imagining global “communities of word & soul” beyond borders, “converging literary communities [that] continue to transform and expand through tributaries flowing across the nation, Mexico, Latin America, Europe and Asia.”<sup>26</sup> Where Romero and company look forward to imagine “the shape [borders] take” as “future...qualitative scenarios,” Herrera (in a line particularly stressed by Kun) “[carries] a triple landscape in [his] head” divided by temporal, geographic, and imaginative borders, and containing “everything—San Francisco,/ Guadalajara, and the city which was an empire/ once upon a time.”<sup>27</sup>

As Kun’s comparison shows, Herrera’s poetry delineates the hyperborder differently from Romero and company. Using what Kun calls “an accessible, and handy, gallery of

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<sup>23</sup> Kun, “A Line in the Sand.”

<sup>24</sup> Herrera, *187 Reasons*, 22-23.

<sup>25</sup> Romero, *Hyperborder*, 17.

<sup>26</sup> Herrera, *187 Reasons*, 22.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 227.

tables, charts, maps and photographs,”<sup>28</sup> Romero and company diagram a neoliberal “boundary unique in the contemporary world.”<sup>29</sup> In contrast, Herrera refigures the hyperborder as a collection of poetic symbols indexing historical struggles. For instance, the triple landscape that Herrera diagrams in his poem “Rodney King, the Black Christ of Los Angeles & All Our White Sins” is demarcated through poetic line breaks that separate each landscape spatially on the page, and therefore temporally, in the process of reading. At the same time, the semantics of the stanza link to indexical meanings: San Francisco is a city in the United States; Guadalajara, a city in Mexico; the “city which was an empire/ once upon a time” is an unnamed emblem of history, an index of the imaginary. Herrera’s triple landscape has three borders enjambed, typologically, on the page, as well as three borders signified through the referential meanings of place names and temporal markers. His triple landscape is a hyperborder in that it is a series of borders that exists in two linked systems that do not reduce to one another. The enjambment, the comma, the capitalization, and the encapsularization—everything that marks off San Francisco from Guadalajara on the page—stands as a typological border. At the same time, this typological border shares meaning with an indexical border signified by the proper names of the cities themselves, which, as Jacques Derrida insists, have “no conceptualizable and common meaning [but] only...a unique referent.”<sup>30</sup> The names of these cities thus contain their own semantic borders from each other; Herrera’s juxtaposition—or connection—of them manifests the borders marked by their different signs.

As with the counterposing of the Posada Song with the border fence discussed above, Herrera’s poetic borders demonstrate that borders are objects that take form in media.

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<sup>28</sup> Kun, “A Line in the Sand.”

<sup>29</sup> Romero, *Hyperborder*, 46.

<sup>30</sup> Derrida, “Who or What,” 36.

“Flexible,” “permeable,” or “hyperactive” borders—as Romero and company assert that global borders have become—must communicate these meanings in some form, through some medium. Romero and company are aware of this—as is stated in *Hyperborder*, “For our purposes, the term *border* goes beyond its traditional definition as a line separating geographical and political boundaries, to one that includes other *types of barriers* between the United States and Mexico, such as economic and cultural divisions”<sup>31</sup>—but their analysis tends to focalize the “scenarios” of borders (e.g. “an integrated, fluid region; “racism and a fear of migrants”)<sup>32</sup> and not the media in which “types of barriers” are formed.

At the same time, different types of barriers do suffuse *Hyperborder* in the forms of the charts, maps, and photographs interpolated throughout the text. Central to the investigations I undertake in this dissertation is the concept that media, like those *within* Romero’s book, as well as the *book itself*, function as borders. They mark and make national and cultural distinctions possible, and produce political subjects that invoke them for authority. In my analysis, the book *Hyperborder* itself functions as a hyperborder, in that the distinctions between the different textual borders in the book construct an environment for what media theorist N. Katherine Hayles calls “hyper attention,” in that they provide “multiple information streams.”<sup>33</sup> Romero and company conceive of *hyperborder* as a signifier that describes the U.S.-Mexico border region “as it exists in its current state,” but I would argue that the border scenarios they describe are hyper only in the sense that they occur in relation to multiple medial borders, including the charts, maps, and photographs on display in Romero’s book.

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<sup>31</sup> Romero, *Hyperborder*, 15 (my emphasis).

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>33</sup> Hayles, “Hyper and Deep,” 187.

This brings me to the main argument of this project, or to the intervention that I would like to make in the field of border studies at large. National borders, I argue, are medial forms that are simultaneously communicated in multiple media without superseding one another. For instance, the U.S.-Mexico border is, at once, a graphic design on numerous—and, in the event of digital production and storage, perhaps countless—maps; a symbolic construction in copious literary and legal textual media; a series of fences erected in various terrestrial media; a photographic icon in still and moving pictures; an architectural design; a painted figure; the list goes on. In these assertions I certainly hold with Romero and company's stance that "the term *border* goes beyond its traditional definition as a line separating geographical and political boundaries, to one that includes other *types of barriers* between the United States and Mexico, such as economic and cultural divisions" (my emphasis). This is indeed one of the meanings of the title of this dissertation—that "the line" is too reductive a metonym for critical study of borders. At the same time, I insist on media specificity. When Romero and company assert that economic and cultural divisions are borders, I want to know how these borders are expressed. What forms, and what media, give economic and cultural divisions shape, or how do media processes of bordering produce and correlate to economic and cultural divisions?

My critical stance in this regard follows the German media studies methodology of *Kulturtechniken*—translated as *cultural techniques*—as it is practiced by Bernhard Siegert and Cornelia Vismann, among others.<sup>34</sup> In outlining cultural techniques, Siegert states,

the study of cultural technologies and techniques reads...media [as] themselves

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<sup>34</sup> In Siegert's recently published *Cultural Techniques: Grids, Filters, Doors, and Other Articulations of the Real* translator Geoffrey Winthrop-Young explains that "cultural techniques" is perhaps the best, but still not an ideal translation in that the "semantic amplitude" of the German word *technik* "ranges all the way to skills, routines, and procedures," and is "wide enough to be translated as *technology*, *technique*, or *technics*," "Translator's Note," xv. These possible meanings must be kept in mind when theorizing with cultural techniques in the English language.

agents of subject constitution. The marks and signs on a map [for instance] do not refer to an authorial subject but to epistemic orders and their struggles for dominance over other epistemic orders, in the course of which marks and things enter a new play of signs. The cartographic operations produce a subject, which correlates to them.<sup>35</sup>

In this light the U.S.-Mexico border, as a medial form, does not refer to the United States and Mexico as the subjects of its mediation, but rather *produces* the United States and Mexico as subjects, which thereon depend on the border for their subjectivity, as the border depends on the nations for its continued existence. The United States and Mexico cannot be articulated from or with one another without “concrete practices and symbolic operations” to process their articulation, operations which are ultimately expressed in medial forms, whether lines on maps, untranslatable proper nouns, legal writ, poetic verses, or fences.<sup>36</sup> The methodology of cultural techniques recognizes that these media function as a “mediating third[s] preceding first and second,”<sup>37</sup> in that while they make the distinction between the U.S. and Mexico possible, they also precede that distinction as the “technical *a priori*”—or the archival media technologies—that provide the conditions of possibility for such a distinction.<sup>38</sup> Mapmaking, as a cultural technique for processing territorial differences, certainly precedes the 19th-century formation of the U.S.-Mexico border. The early modern state development of maps into tools for “marking territorial boundaries...managing land usage...rationalizing fiscal instruments, [and] preparing for military engagement,”<sup>39</sup> reflected the presence of a discourse whereby maps, “in the service of the state, *produce[d]* the territory as a political reality.” The

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<sup>35</sup> Siegert, “The map,” 13-14.

<sup>36</sup> Siegert, “Cacography,” 30.

<sup>37</sup> Siegert, “Cultural Techniques,” 61.

<sup>38</sup> Siegert, “The map,” 14. Siegert adapts this concept from Foucault’s idea of the “historical *a priori*.” See Foucault, *The Archaeology*, 143.

<sup>39</sup> Kagan and Schmidt, “Maps and the Early Modern,” 662.



cartographic U.S.-Mexico border cannot be separated from the technique of mapping and its epistemic history. Mapmaking produces a border that does not exist “in ideas...but in media operations.”<sup>40</sup>

The thrust of this project is that this thesis holds for the various medial forms that the border takes: In producing the border, maps, fences, or short stories index different media histories that do not reduce to one another, and that do not synthesize into a common border. However, these different medial forms can be linked to one another as media operations that share common cultural techniques, and that therefore reference certain “epistemic orders and their struggles for dominance over other epistemic orders.”<sup>41</sup> For my purposes, I wish to employ a different definition of hyperborder than that of Romero and company, although it is a definition that, I will show, can be critically applied to the scenarios described in *Hyperborder*. In this project, I develop the concept of the hyperborder as a border that *extends* across media. The hyperborder is the framework that links together different mediated borders, and that proposes and examines epistemological connections between them. The hyperborder is a way of attaining a global and comparative view of borders, while at the same time accounting for their different and irreducible media forms. In the course of this project, I will examine border forms primarily in three media: literary media, including poetry and fictional prose; cartographic media, with an attention to different cultural meanings of mapmaking; and infrastructural media, particularly distinct types of fencing. By drawing connections between the borders produced in these different media, I am ultimately examining borders as media networks, or as media systems that “[comprise] a more or less

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<sup>40</sup> Siegert, “The map,” 15.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 14.

complex actor network that includes technical objects and chains of operations,” and that “allow both the being human or the being inhuman of the actors.”<sup>42</sup>

Just as my hyperborder concept qualitatively differs from the one used by Romero and company, my use of the term *hyper* references a slightly different branch of the term’s genealogy than the “hyper” in “hyperactivity.” The etymology of *hyper* traces the word’s origins to ancient Greek, and indicates the 20th-century adoption of the term as a prefix in both medical and computing contexts. The preposition and prefix ὑπέρ—meaning over, above, or beyond—first appears in Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.<sup>43</sup> A word akin to hyperborder also exists in classical literature: The word ὑπερόριος, which combines ὑπέρ and ὄριος (boundary, landmark—used to describe the functional ancestor of the U.S.-Mexico border obelisks) to form an adjective meaning “over the boundaries, abroad.”<sup>44</sup> The English words “hyper” and “super” descended from the Indo-European root of ὑπέρ—with “super” being the Latin cognate for ὑπέρ—as did the German “über.” The use of the prefix by Romero and company indicates, at least, this general usage: The “numerous complexities” of the U.S.-Mexico border mark it as an excessive border, a *super* border with a “breadth of issues confronting it.”<sup>45</sup>

By describing the border in terms of “hyperactivity,” Romero and company also indicates that their usage invokes *hyper* for its medical connotations. The “breadth of issues” confronting the border are therefore symptoms of hyperactivity seeking possible cures. In my usage of “hyper” however, I am referencing the other significant 20th-century adoption of the

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<sup>42</sup> Siegert, “Doors,” 7-8.

<sup>43</sup> “ὑπέρ.” Greek Word Study Tool. *Perseus Digital Library*.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=u%28pe%5Cr&la=greek&can=u%28pe%5Cr0&prior=ste/rmon&d=Perseus:text:1999.01.0133:book=4:card=528&i=1>

<sup>44</sup> “ὑπερόριος.” Greek Word Study Tool. *Perseus Digital Library*.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=u%28pero%2Frios&la=greek#lexicon>

<sup>45</sup> Romero, *Hyperborder*, 42.

prefix, and connoting computing and the information age. In particular, my concept of a hyperborder as an extension of borders across media implies the usage of “hyper” made by the philosopher Ted Nelson in 1965 when he proposed the development of “hypermedia”—like “hypertext” and “hyperfilm”—for organizing and navigating “complex file structures.” Nelson employed “hyper” to “[connote] extension and generality,” and to denote “the inability of [systemic] objects to be comprised sensibly into linear media.” Nelson envisioned hypertext as,

a body of written or pictorial material interconnected in such a complex way that it could not conveniently be presented or represented on paper. It may contain summaries, or maps of its contents and their interrelations; it may contain annotations, additions and footnotes from scholars who have examined it.<sup>46</sup>

Such a systemic object is generally recognizable now; with some structural reconsideration, hypertext became the organizing medium of the Internet. A hyperborder, as I see it, is similarly a kind of file structure—an “interconnected body of...material”—but one assembled of incompatible border symbols and materialities that, in their connections, threaten to contradict, negate, or denature each other. Nelson’s hypermedia hypothetically work by synthesizing diverse objects into functional structures of linked information. However, I am not considering the hyperborder as a functioning whole, but a merely as a comparative assemblage. Analyzing how the medial forms of borders in maps, literary texts, and fences could link, and have been linked, to each other, and what the effect of these linkages are, is the task of this project. Among the social problematics that drive this work is the theoretical hegemonic threat posed by a hyperborder that functions whole in the context

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<sup>46</sup> Nelson, “A File Structure,” 96, 98.

of the control society, and how alternate, heterogeneous assemblages of borders can resist such a structure.

In rethinking the hyperborder I do not wish to throw out Romero and company's framework entirely. By considering the border as it extends across media forms—as a media network, as a comparative assemblage—I am also trying to consider the border in terms of “qualitative scenarios.” While Romero and company locate these scenarios in the “context” of “themes [like security and transportation] that relate to the state of the border, the United States, and Mexico,”<sup>47</sup> I locate them in media operations like mapmaking that produce subjects and establish correlations. While Romero and company's methodology is speculative and future-oriented, mine is analytical and historical. While they propose development, I propose deconstruction. Where they see prosperity, I see power. Their venue is the trade conference, mine, primarily the archive.

With these qualifications established, I cannot disagree with Romero and company's statement that, “the state of the border and the methods for resolving its problems have become the interests of everyone.”<sup>48</sup> Indeed, by theorizing the extension of borders across media, I am also engaging in a geopolitical analysis whereby I acknowledge that the media operations of bordering take place locally in particular places among particular peoples while simultaneously being distributed in other places among other peoples at a global scale. A crucial premise for this project is the recognition that there can be more than one border at a single site—like the layering of fences, cameras, and obelisk at Friendship Park. Likewise, this project discerns that globalization is mediated through configurations of disparate borders that extend far beyond a single site (for instance, the paradigm of air travel places

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<sup>47</sup> Romero, *Hyperborder*, 16-17.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 72.

international borders, in the medial forms of customs gates, far from established cartographic national boundaries). As a network of mediated borders, my concept of the hyperborder is a way of addressing globalization and interdependence. I concur with Romero and company, that as profligate, global objects, borders have become the interests of everyone.

Furthermore, I argue that everyone's interest in "the state of the border and the methods for resolving its problems" means that everyone must acknowledge that the "state of the border" produces them as subjects, and that "methods for resolving its problems," are in fact invitations to draw, write, or build new borders. My project, as much as Romero and company's does, concerns itself with those methods of bordering, their histories, and implicitly, their futures.<sup>49</sup>

### **Fields and Disciplines**

In developing the comparative framework of the hyperborder, I am making use of the interdisciplinary potential of comparative literature, albeit in a way that problematizes the discipline by including what may not be considered "literary" in my comparisons. In a lecture on the concept of comparative literature, Derrida examines how the necessary "encyclopedic opening" of the discipline could lead to "far-fetched" comparisons:

In order to compare literatures or literary phenomena, I must first know, at least by way of precomprehension, what the literary is, lacking which I risk comparing anything with anything in the name of comparative literature. I would compare for example a painting and a real plant, a cookbook and a constitutional text, a novel and a bank check, a speech by Carter and the *Iliad*.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Derrida, "Who or What," 29-30.

With Derrida's caution in mind, I cannot deny that indeed, this project represents a "wandering"—perhaps, a "delirious"—practice of comparative literature,<sup>51</sup> in that in the next four chapters, I will be comparing novels, poems, prose poems, short stories, paper maps, digital maps, barbed wire fences, chain link fences, and steel bollard fences. This list resembles the comparative motley that Derrida describes above more than it represents what he calls "the minimal consensus" of comparative literature: that "one must compare literature with literature."<sup>52</sup>

Derrida himself acknowledges that "that this idea is at once very trivial and very strange," precisely because it proceeds through a "logic of the vicious circle," whereby "one must already have a precomprehension of what literature means...if only so as to choose the objects of investigation" that will define what literature means.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, I must disclaim here that I have deferred the question "What is literature?" by answering that it is a type of media. In this way, although originating in comparative literature, my methodology has wandered, through the discipline's encyclopedic opening, into media studies, where I can compare objects like those listed above through concepts like "techniques of knowledge," "discourse operators," and symbolic...practices."<sup>54</sup> This is indeed the trajectory I have followed during my time as a graduate student.

What has this project retained of comparative literature in its execution? In her text *Death of a Discipline*, Gayatri Spivak argues for the practice of a new "Comparative Literature supplemented by Area Studies," which is "responsible, responsive, answerable," to a "planet" of "mysterious and discontinuous...collectivities," as opposed to the rational

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Siegert, "The Map," 14.

pluralities of globalization.<sup>55</sup> In her formulation, Spivak envisions that a splicing of “comparative literary studies” and “Comparative social studies, as represented by Area Studies,” will furnish a disciplinary package that can examine “the politics of the production of knowledge [of the world]...[with] a care for language and idiom.”<sup>56</sup>

While my project is focused on a geographical area, it does not necessarily follow an Area Studies logic—I am not diagramming “foreign ‘areas’” relative to the United States—any more than it follows the foundational logic of comparative literature, which studied literary production through the prism of nations. My project has emerged amid the destabilization in both of these disciplines, as Spivak recounts, during which “knowable, self-contained areas,” and “old ‘national’ boundaries” have been questioned as frames for study. Indeed, my project is situated precisely in the domain of the “nation-region divide” which formerly distinguished the two disciplines.<sup>57</sup> Much of the literature that I read in the following chapters—N. Scott Momaday’s (Kiowa) *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/ La Frontera*, for instance—has been considered as *regional* texts according to a center-periphery model of literature. At the same time, these texts have become *central* to the disciplinary canons of Indigenous Studies and Chicano Studies (not to mention Feminist Studies in Anzaldúa’s case). The questions of nationalism and regionalism are not anachronistic for these disciplines in the light of globalization, but rather pressing and emergent considerations of possible politics.

In this project I have tried to stay tuned to the disciplinary ideals that Spivak outlines while supplementing my own sort of interdisciplinary work with comparative literature. I am grounding my work in a region with geographical or world-systemic parameters, and with a

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<sup>55</sup> Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, 102.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 4-5.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 3-8.

trans-disciplinary concern. It is the region that literary theorist José David Saldívar calls the “Southwestern U.S.-Mexican borderlands (from Texas to California)”,<sup>58</sup> that historical geographer D.W. Meinig calls an “Anglo-Hispanic-Indian combination of peoples [in] a broad cultural borderland...[with] strong bonds of connection across the international boundary”;<sup>59</sup> and that historian Samuel Truett refers to as the “U.S.-Mexico borderlands” and qualifies as a “a patchwork of histories with considerable overlap and conspicuous divides” in reference to its historic Indigenous, Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. polities.<sup>60</sup>

This region is border studies’ paradigmatic borderlands, conceptualized by historian Herbert Eugene Bolton in the early 20th century as a “Spanish-American counterpoint to Frederick Jackson Turner’s influential 1893 frontier narrative.” As Truett and historian Pekka Hämäläinen emphasize, the borderlands framework was, from its outset, worldlier in its dimensions and more collective in its politics than Turner’s binaric frontier narrative of westward-driving U.S. civilization and Native savagery:

[Bolton] paid more attention to Indians and other empires and saw a large swath of North America as the “meeting place and fusing place of two streams of European civilization, one coming from the south, and the other from the north.” By 1921 he repackaged this as borderlands history—a perspective that not only privileged multiple native and imperial voices but also played out on a more open-ended, hemispheric stage.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Saldívar, *Trans-Americanity*, xiv.

<sup>59</sup> Meinig, *Southwest*, 6, 126.

<sup>60</sup> Truett, *Fugitive Landscapes*, 7.

<sup>61</sup> Hämäläinen and Truett, “On Borderlands,” 341. Hämäläinen and Truett remind the reader that “Bolton did not in fact coin the term [borderlands]; his editor proposed it in 1917, quite possibly with different resonances in mind.”



My project remains concerned with Bolton's large swath of North America, with its multiple native and imperial voices, and with its open-ended, hemispheric conditions. Indeed, the next four chapters are grounded in—and predicated upon—borderlands historiography, sharing, to a certain degree, its

postmodern, poststructuralist disenchantment with master narratives...[its] alertness to the contingencies and negotiability of social categories...[its analysis of] transnationalism and globalization...[and its contemplation of the] relevance of nation-states, the power of nonstate actors, and the long-term viability of...political and social borders.<sup>62</sup>

The sense of history in this project is thus a borderlands sense of history, but one directed towards a borderlands of media—toward medial differences, and how they determine boundaries in the symbolic and in the real. I analyze how the U.S.-Mexico borderlands can be considered a correlate of media operations like boundary marking, fence-building, mapmaking, and the writing of literature; these cultural techniques “introduc[e the] distinctions [and] process [the] distinction[s]” that comprise the borderlands, “and thereby first make observable the unity of the things distinguished” at local or global scales.<sup>63</sup> While some of these techniques apply to what Gloria Anzaldúa calls the “actual physical borderland [of] the Texas-U.S. Southwest/Mexican border,” others could apply to what she calls “the psychological borderlands, the sexual borderlands, and the spiritual borderlands,” in that the differences they process extend beyond terrestrial geopolitics and into the realms of the body, into mental landscapes of the kind poeticized by Herrera, or into demarcations of the

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 340.

<sup>63</sup> Siegert, “Doors,” 8.

sacred.<sup>64</sup> In the chapters that follow, iconic cartographic borders are shown as agents that are complicit in the starvation and physical death of migrants, infrastructural borders process conceptual differences between humans, animals, citizens and non-citizens, and symbolic literary borders process epistemological differences between sacred, historical, and reminiscent modes of narration.

## **Methodologies**

Spivak writes that “the literary text in isolation does not lead to savvy politics.”<sup>65</sup> In the course of my research I came to realize that my interdisciplinary project at the borders of media systems and cultural predicates required a sense of accountability to the “collectivities” both inside and outside the academy, and particularly to the collectivities that are subalternized within the binational phrasing of the U.S.-Mexico border. In describing this region I have generally included the signifier “Indigenous” as a way of trifurcating the boundary. This has always been an insufficient solution, because in terms of nationality, the general signifier “Indigenous” could be fragmented into a wealth of bureaucratic entities. In the geographic area covered by my project, there are numerous separate *tribal* governments, some of which identify as *nations*—the Navajo (Diné) Nation, for instance—while others use the official term *tribe*, like the Zuni Tribe. In this project I use the dialectical term “U.S.-Mexico” precisely to highlight its exclusionary logic, and I seek to refer directly to tribal entities and spaces by the names that Indigenous tribes or nations themselves use. At the same time, the title of my project does not include the signifier “U.S.-Mexico” because the project itself is meant to be inclusive of the differences I outline above. I use “trans-

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<sup>64</sup> Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/ La Frontera*, iii.

<sup>65</sup> Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*, 53.

American” to account for a broad, interconnected space of transnational signifiers, roughly analogous to the hemispheric signifier, *Americas*.

My attempts to monitor my terminology have been mirrored by my desire to engage with the politics that populate my research as, what Spivak calls, “[producers of] active cultural media rather than as objects of cultural study.”<sup>66</sup> Throughout the course of the project I have sought to balance institutional, archival work inside the academy with more community based, participatory research. As a white, non-Indigenous scholar who examines how subjects are produced through medial borders in literature, cartography, and infrastructure, I must acknowledge the institutional borders that foster my own academic inquiry. This approach has required me to try to address myself personally to the communities I study, and to try to engage ethically with the lively voices that construct knowledge outside and in dialogue with academy. In the past few years I have engaged in two localized community-based research discussions. In relation to my second chapter, I have had an ongoing conversation with Jim Enote, who is the director of the Zuni Map Art project, at Zuni Pueblo. In relation to my third chapter, I have been a regular participant with the group Friends of Friendship Park, which is a non-governmental friendship initiative that connects denizens of San Diego and Tijuana.

### **Chapter Outlines**

My first chapter is concerned with histories of Western cartography, and how the map has been positioned as an instrument of rational power. I apply my examination of mapping to an exigent social issue: the precariousness of migration in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Luis Alberto Urrea’s novel *The Devil’s Highway* inspires my central premise, that the borderlands is, materially, a hyperborder of documentation that, as a progress narrative,

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 9.

ostensibly begins with Spanish colonial conquest and carries through to today's digital paradigm. In other words, political domination in the region is a function of record keeping. In this regard, the map is the document that territorialized and ultimately secured the region, and that brokers the difference between living and dying. In order to question and critique this progress narrative I examine a selection of what I call "re-markable maps," including a palimpsestic re-marking of an antiquated map, a complimentary road map that promotes a highway that never existed, and a cartographic artifact that records the stress of migration as spontaneous markings. Each map revels in the fictive artifice of cartography and reveals a rational aporia at the heart of the entity known as the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. In their formal and semantic innovations the maps exemplified how materiality correlates to the symbolic effects of the map, to its informational potential, and to its ability to be deformed. I assert that critical attention to the re-markability of maps is necessary to combat the givenness of the map as a rational tool, and to resist the hegemony and political control that the idea of the objective map enables.

Chapter Two focuses on Indigenous mapping techniques. While the purpose of Chapter One was to critically undermine the givenness of cartographic progress narratives, the purpose of Chapter Two is to examine the necessity of cartography as a theoretical and practical discipline for demarcating Indigenous sovereignties. My general argument in Chapter Two is that the map is a ground upon which epistemological battles are being waged, and that these struggles serve as a metonym for the larger project of Indigenous self-determination. I assert that these struggles indicate the extension of a global hyperborder with a digital and analog presence. By engaging in cartographic self-determination, Indigenous communities act to adapt, adopt, reject, integrate, or ignore this global hyperborder. More

importantly, by using Indigenous epistemologies to develop cartographic systems that serve their communities and critique the colonality of power, Indigenous cartographers are in the process of constructing an alternate hyperborder that can assert Indigenous sovereignties and produce what Zuni artist Jim Enote calls “mutual understanding and peace making.”<sup>67</sup>

My third chapter moves the project away from cartography and toward issues of infrastructural border media. It is concerned with the question of how symbolic texts—in particular, literary texts—relate to infrastructural forms, and what the effects are of referencing one medium with another. In order to account for the incommensurability of fences with literary media—and for the dynamic relations that occur despite their uncommon medial systems—I mobilize media theorist Marshall McLuhan’s idea that “the ‘content’ of any medium is always another medium,” in order to examine how media traffic in the form and content of other media.<sup>68</sup> I argue in Chapter Three that despite their incommensurable medial systems, the cultural techniques of writing and fencing are intrinsically related, and that they are correlative operations that, in the words of media theorist Cornelia Vismann, produce political subjects that claim mastery over them as media and over the “[political operation] associated with [them].”<sup>69</sup> This line of argumentation leads to an analysis of how mastery over one operation—say, the writing of literature—can furnish mastery over another operation, like fencing, due to their shared technological a priori and their related acts of inscribing difference. I follow this argument through four literary texts, beginning with an extended reading of Robert Frost’s poem “Mending Wall.” Frost’s poem has become, in the United States, the paradigmatic text about the social stakes of fencing. I place the poem into a media historical context, whereby the fence that it symbolizes serves as an indexical

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<sup>67</sup> Enote, “A:shiwi,” 8.

<sup>68</sup> McLuhan, *Understanding*, 8.

<sup>69</sup> Vismann, “Cultural Techniques,” 84.

connection to histories of fencing and to technological shifts in the act of fencing. Following Frost, I directly engage U.S.-Mexico border infrastructure as it is symbolized in the literary work of Gloria Anzaldúa and Carlos Fuentes. Anzaldúa socializes the late 20th-century border fence, and makes it possible to imagine it as a heterogeneous—even familiar—collection of objects. Diagramming the technological border relations that emerge at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, Fuentes depicts the fence as not only a symbolic, but also a material *lens*—or series of lenses—for viewing the globalized other. I finish my literary analysis with an appraisal of the encyclopedic work of William T. Vollmann, whose literary subjectivity demonstrates the correlation between mastery over the fence and the book in the context of the U.S.-Mexico hyperborder. In between these literary readings I engage in media histories of the fence that strive to connect the literary assertions of Frost, Anzaldúa, Fuentes, and Vollmann, to the fence as an archaeological object, and to fencing as a cultural technique.

My fourth chapter argues that from its very outset, the U.S.-Mexico borderlands were secured through a biopolitical hyperborder of cartographic, biological, and commercial media. The first three chapters address biopolitics as a context for cartographic boundaries and for infrastructural partitioning, but Chapter Four is explicitly focused on state, commercial, and academic media that strategically delineate and enforce distinctions in the categories of species and race. Michel Foucault dates the origin of biopower, as a “technology of power,” to the 19th century, and concisely defines it as “state control of the biological.”<sup>70</sup> Chapter Four is grounded in Foucault’s theory, as well as that of animal studies theorist Nicole Shukin, and closely interrogates the symbolic figures of the horse and the Indian as they have been classified by a biopolitical hyperborder. Three types of media

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<sup>70</sup> Foucault, “*Society*”, 240.

exemplify this hyperborder. First, a government document—the 1857 *Report of the United States and Mexican Boundary Survey* by the U.S. surveyor William H. Emory—that employs symbolic race and species divides to justify regulation strategies like assimilation and extermination. Second, a commercial literary document: Robert Cunninghame Graham’s 1899 short story “A Hegira: A Story of the Apache Indians,” which presents the violent historical narrativization of “the Apaches” as limit cases for the human species that served to bind citizens of Mexico and the United States into cohesive populations. Third, a set of historical documents: historiography and historical cartography concerning the problematic spread of the horse that indicate that the normativization of the horse is a function of security policies applied to the bodies of horses, and of knowledge work that renders the horse as a symbol of both wildness and domestication. Chapter Four shows how the figures of the horse and the Indian have been used as appropriative and repressive symbols of the biopolitical hyperborder that have served for over a century and half to regulate the domains of the human and the non-human animal in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

The interdisciplinary nature and geographic framework of this project allow for a variety of theoretical lenses and research practices. While each chapter analyzes different combinations of media, there is a general order sustained throughout what follows. The first two chapters are primarily focused on cartographic and literary texts, and depend strongly on archival research. The third chapter focuses specifically on infrastructure and literature; while also grounded in documentary research, it contains analysis of fencing based upon participatory observation and fieldwork, and represents a methodological move out of the archive and into the field. In the fourth chapter I return to solely textual analysis, elaborate upon and historicize the biopolitical context introduced in chapter three, and again compare

literary texts and maps. The epilogue at the end of the dissertation examines a community-based mapping project at Zuni Pueblo as an emergent project that I believe exemplifies the themes of this dissertation as it also resists becoming relocated as academic knowledge. The Zuni Map Art Project is predicated upon the idea that media can produce peace and understanding through careful, culturally respectful practices. After constructing media histories characterized by the colonality of power, biopolitics, and resistance, I think that an orientation toward Indigenous self-determination and peacemaking through media use is a hopeful conclusion to this project.



## Chapter One

### Re-markable Maps: Redeploying Anachronistic Materials of the Borderlands

With artful and fictive maps and antiquarian forgeries, there has always been “the possibility of an ironic reversal,” which is the media-reflective mode, for when a fiction is revealed, artificiality too is revealed, and the coming out of media is witnessed.

—Wolfgang Ernst, “Let There Be Irony,” 2005

#### I. Introduction

This chapter begins in the desert, but its actual terrain is the archive. It is primarily concerned with histories of Western cartography, and how the map has been positioned as an instrument of rational power. In this sense, it draws from a late 20th-century turn in cartographic criticism by Barbara Belyea, J.B. Harley, and Denis Wood (among others) that applied post-structural and post-modern theories to the scientific veneer of cartography. These theorists made it possible to recognize maps as objects that occur within discourse networks, and not as so-called mirrors of nature. I further their critique here by situating my examination of mapping in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, and by tying it to an exigent situation, namely the precariousness of migration in the region.

I ground this chapter in Luis Alberto Urrea’s novel *The Devil’s Highway*, which dramatizes the deaths of 14 migrants in the borderlands in 2001. While Urrea’s novel indicts a “politics of stupidity”<sup>1</sup> that makes it possible for people to die for want of work in the middle of a desert far from their homes, it also points a curious reader in two interlinked directions: the archive and the map. *The Devil’s Highway* is built on the premise that the borderlands is ostensibly a hyperborder of coercive documentation that begins with Spanish conquest. Urrea implies that political domination in the region is a function of record keeping. In this regard, the map is a form of documentation that territorialized and ultimately

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<sup>1</sup> Urrea, *The Devil’s Highway: A True Story*, 18.

secured the region, and that, in the case of the Yuma 14—the doomed migrants of Urrea’s narrative—brokered the difference between living and dying. Urrea underscores this point by geotagging in his text the locations where the U.S. Border Patrol found the migrants. In so doing, his novel emphasizes that the Yuma 14 died despite progressive U.S. cartographic control over the borderlands.

Inspired by Urrea, and seeking to examine further a historical cartographic U.S.-Mexico hyperborder, I spent months at the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, researching in their Map and Western Americana collections. Seeking cartographic texts that elucidated migration patterns, or histories of territorialization and security, I was myself *found* by a couple of documents—or so it seemed (I have since found this serendipity to be a common occurrence in archival research)—that sent me into a more media-technical direction than I was following. In what follows, I examine these documents, one of which is a palimpsestic re-marking of an antiquated map, and the other of which is a complimentary road map that promotes a highway that never existed. In both cases, the maps themselves reveal—or revel in—the fictive artifice of cartography, and in so doing, divulge a rational aporia—what Chicana studies and literary theorist Mary Pat Brady calls a “temporal geography”—at the heart of the entity known as the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

In working with these two maps, it occurred to me that their media operations resembled those of a map series I had encountered, artist Pedro Lasch’s *Guias de Ruta*, which was included with the 2007 *Atlas of Radical Cartography*. Although the archival maps reflected historical discourses, and Lasch’s maps were contemporary geopolitical critiques, all three cartographies revealed not only the artifice of mapping, but also the ways in which the materiality of the map was implicated with its truth claims. In their formal and semantic

innovations the maps exemplified how materiality correlates to the symbolic effects of the map, to its informational potential, and to its ability to be deformed.

I came to see that despite, or perhaps because of their obsolescence and artifice, the borderlands maps that I was working with were re-markable. That is to say that each map was, or could-be re-marked in ways that altered their original information, and that deepened their symbolic potential. This chapter is ultimately about the concept of re-markability, which I define as the medial potential of maps to be productively deformed, to reference different hyperborders, and to critique systems of power knowledge. In this sense, re-markability can be utilized for multiple discursive purposes. As a critique of linear discourse it can propose new temporal and geopolitical connections. It can also facilitate cartographic revision in ways that continue or extend dominant regimes. I assert that critical attention to the re-markability of maps is necessary to combat the givenness of the map as a rational tool, and to resist the hegemony and political control that the idea of the objective map enables.

## **II. Times and Places for Materializing the Map**

Early in *The Devil's Highway*, his account of the deaths of 14 migrants in the Sonoran desert in early 2001, Luis Alberto Urrea lists the effects of the deceased. Among the items were several distinct belt buckles; one man carried Mexican coins; another had Mexican bills in his back pocket and a letter in his front pocket. One man wore basketball shoes; one man had red underpants; another man had a green handkerchief. Another man ““had a colored piece of paper” in the pocket of his jeans. For Urrea, these items were “the things they carried.”<sup>2</sup> This allusion to Tim O’Brien’s short story connotes youth, vulnerability, and death far from home. It also indexes one of the story’s prominent themes, namely that items borne

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<sup>2</sup> Urrea, *The Devil's Highway*, 32.

in dangerous times can signify numerous things: necessity, security, class, rank, skill, mission, superstition, capitalism, love, hate, fear—the list goes on.<sup>3</sup>

The Yuma 14—as the group of deceased migrants came to be known—were certainly not soldiers. As Urrea classifies them, they were, “mostly, small-plot farmers, coffee growers, a schoolboy and his dad,” who had traversed Mexico from Veracruz, before crossing the border, becoming lost, and dying of hyperthermia in southern Arizona.<sup>4</sup> While the grunts of “The Things They Carried” bore enormous burdens of ordnance and provision, the Yuma 14 did not collectively carry enough, as Urrea puts it, “to fill a carry-on bag.” Although O’Brien’s story ends with its combat-fatigued lieutenant reviewing his field maps with a quixotic will to invulnerability, none of the Yuma 14 was found with a map, and not even their guides, as Urrea put it, “knew where they were.” The migrants’ trio of *coyotes*—or hired guides—inferred their routes across the desert borderlands “from freeway maps and road atlases,” scribbled pathways “on notebook paper with Bic pens,” and described the terrain with ad-hoc names like ‘The First Desert,’ ‘The Second Desert,’ ‘The Low Pass,’ [and] ‘The High Pass.’”<sup>5</sup> Urrea asserts that despite, or perhaps because of, these orientation techniques, the coyotes ultimately led the Yuma 14 “into a blank map with landmarks etched in transient memory.”

### **Wrong Place, Right Time**

Could carrying an authoritative map of some kind—a trail map, a topographical map—have aided the lost migrants of Urrea’s narrative? This is precisely the allegorical question of Miroslav Holub’s poem, “Some Brief Thoughts on Maps,” in which a Hungarian Army reconnaissance unit becomes lost in a blizzard in the Alps. In Holub’s scenario, it is

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<sup>3</sup> O’Brien, *The Things*, 1-25.

<sup>4</sup> Urrea, *The Devil’s Highway*, 32, 39.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 87, 108.

not the geographical accuracy of the map's semiotics, but rather its material presence, that works to soothe the doomed men, who recount their ordeal to their relieved lieutenant: "We considered ourselves/ lost and waited for the end. And then one of us/ found a map in his pocket. That calmed us down." In the diegesis of the poem, the map geolocates the men, and eventually guides them from the Alpine wilderness—"We pitched camp, lasted out the snowstorm and then with the map/ we discovered our bearings"—despite the fact that, upon final examination, the "remarkable map...was not a map of the Alps but of the Pyrenees."<sup>6</sup>

The punch line of Holub's episode is the arbitrariness of the cartographic sign, but the other irony is the emergence of the artifactual map from the pocket of one of the soldiers, and its agency in spite of its misplaced anachronism. It is an archived document—a stored index, presumably, of a military event in a different mountainous zone, at a time in the past. The found map may inspire the possibility of survival, in that its paper medium mediates a material presence and an artifactual pastness. It may impart the possibility of escape, in that having come unexpectedly into the group it implies an outside. What Holub's allegory insinuates is that the mediality of this "remarkable" map is expressed in its materiality as well as in its semiotics of georeference, and that perhaps even that "the materiality of the map interferes with its contents," in the sense that a found map of the wrong place from another time, can, with its own curious material agency, guide lost travelers to the right place at the right time. In Holub's allegory, a map can locate its users despite its own semantic dislocation, which is, in fact, the supposed "power" of the Western artifactual map. By dislocating, or abstracting data using "cultural techniques" such as writing, drawing (Earth writing/drawing, in the sense of *geography*), mathematical operations, and mechanical processes (such as printing), cartographic artifacts materialize mobile knowledge spaces and

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<sup>6</sup> Holub, "Some Brief Thought," 118.

construct knowledge networks based on “epistemic orders.”<sup>7</sup> The lost soldiers in Holub’s allegory are not in the Pyrenees, but they are Hungarian, they are soldiers, and they utilize discourse networks based upon European cultural techniques. The serendipitous map gives the lost, snowbound soldiers their cultural bearings, and ironically aids them in their mission, which, in being reconnaissance soldiers, is to return with a map.

I am concerned with the productive irony inherent in such a map, which instantiates designs of scientific truth and accuracy, but quickly becomes anachronistic and anatomic. The need for newer, more accurate maps and mapping technologies is a condition of global modernity, a byproduct of the technological innovation that correlates to “commercial interests, capitalist spirit, imperialism, thirst for knowledge.”<sup>8</sup> In the 18th century the imperative of newer, more accurate maps guided Captain James Cook, who instituted an authoritative “geography of [empirical] facts” against “vague and improbable stories.”<sup>9</sup> Today, despite an epistemic shift to satellite/photographic maps and digital GIS technology, the director of Google’s Ground Truth and Map Maker echoes the canard, “the biggest challenge for any map maker is as soon as you’ve published it, it’s out of date.”<sup>10</sup> Out of *date* can be shifted to mean out of *data*: As the map is materialized and distributed, it immediately becomes subject to falsification, corruption, physical decay, and loss. If maps are propositions—as cartographic theorist Denis Wood argues they are<sup>11</sup>—their ready-made obsolescence renders them malapropisms. Given a little time, a map can easily become a “confused heap of contradictions and misrepresentations”—neither factual nor accurate, but

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<sup>7</sup> Siegert, “The Map,” 13.

<sup>8</sup> Latour, “Visualisation,” 6.

<sup>9</sup> Belyea, “Myth as Science,” 3, 13.

<sup>10</sup> Shankland, “With Ground Truth.”

<sup>11</sup> Wood and Krygier, “Ce N’est Pas.” Wood claims that, “Because maps are propositions, you **must accept responsibility** for the realities you **create** with maps...” (his emphasis).

rather artful, fictive, and false.<sup>12</sup>

I argue that in its obsolescence the agency of the map begins. As it bides time and takes up space, the map begins to produce historical distinctions, and it begins to discourse. German media theorist Wolfgang Ernst asserts,

With artful and fictive maps and antiquarian forgeries, there has always been ‘the possibility of an ironic reversal’...because when a fiction is revealed, artificiality is also revealed, and the coming out of media is witnessed.<sup>13</sup>

In its obsolescence, the anachronistic, anatopic—and thus merely artful and fictive—map takes on a second life, or becomes, in a word from Holub’s poem, *remarkable*.<sup>14</sup> Where geography marked it, the obsolete map re-marks itself as historiography. Although its mediality concealed the techniques of its creation, its deconstruction as artifact reveals its production as an object. In this way, an obsolete map escapes the domain of geography, and opens itself up to the possibilities of historical and media archaeological analyses.<sup>15</sup> The potential of these analyses is to critique the irony inherent in the way a “stable” “vision of the whole” concurrently exists as an assemblage of “contradictory assumptions.” Or, in other words, the way a graphiated media “surface”<sup>16</sup> is also a piece of “textile matter,” characterized by “folds and bends and bubbles of colors.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Belyea, “Myth as Science,” 1.

<sup>13</sup> Ernst, *Digital Memory*, 52.

<sup>14</sup> It should be acknowledged that ‘remarkable’ is a translation of the Czech word ‘podivuhodnou,’ which more properly means ‘wonderful’ or ‘marvelous,’ and has alternately been translated as such. I will hold with ‘remarkable,’ because I think that it indicates the irony at play in the map’s reemergence. Also, I will re-mark the word as ‘re-markable’ throughout this chapter to indicate its conceptual application.

<sup>15</sup> In the early 1990s, J.B. Harley proposed poststructural techniques of textual interpretation, particularly discourse analysis and deconstruction, as being novel new ways to re-mark maps as social creations. I utilize media archaeology and cultural technical analysis as contemporary adjustments to Harley’s propositions, given the embedding of these theoretical frameworks within poststructuralist theory.

<sup>16</sup> Massey, *For Space*, 109-110. Massey quotes Gayatri Spivak on the “colonizer’s necessary yet contradictory assumptions of an uninscribed earth.”

<sup>17</sup> Siegert, “The Map,” 16. For Siegert, this is indicative of the way in which a map is a smooth and striated surface at once.

This chapter is devoted to an examination of re-markable maps that have outlasted certain “struggles for dominance” between “epistemic orders,” and that now “enter a new play of signs”<sup>18</sup> at the same time that they index “techno-historical events.”<sup>19</sup> Using what Ernst calls a “parallel lines” methodology, I trace the cultural and technical histories of three maps as I examine their presence in paper archives and digital databases. The first line of analysis concerns a “human voice” of cultural history, in which maps, as media objects, reference historical narratives of cultural and technological relations. The second line of analysis counters cartographic progress narratives by instrumentalizing obsolete maps in the present and analyzing their epistemological potential, i.e. their re-markability.

### **Temporal Geographies**

Unlike for Holub’s soldiers, no maps emerge to calm or guide the Yuma 14 safely through Urrea’s narrative in *The Devil’s Highway*. However, between the author’s note and the first chapter, the book contains a map of the migrants’ border crossing. A dotted line wending among hills signs performs the “savage little maze” negotiated by the migrants, and an itinerary counts and marks the turns of the narrative/trail.<sup>20</sup> By a cartographic logic of way finding, the map is both belated and novel—it makes legible for the reader a procession that was tragically illegible for the migrant. More importantly, as a text, the map produces a stable, selective space in which the reader can situate the geocoordinates, toponyms, roads, trails, and rivers of Urrea’s story. The stability of the book’s map is a function of its use of what cartographer Arthur H. Robinson called “logical” cartographic conventions, particularly its use of “conventional signs,” like “dots [or] circles...for cities,” and “dot-dash lines for

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>19</sup> Kittler, *Gramophone*, 229. The argument here is that one cannot separate signs from the technology of their inscription.

<sup>20</sup> Urrea, *The Devil’s Highway*, 113.



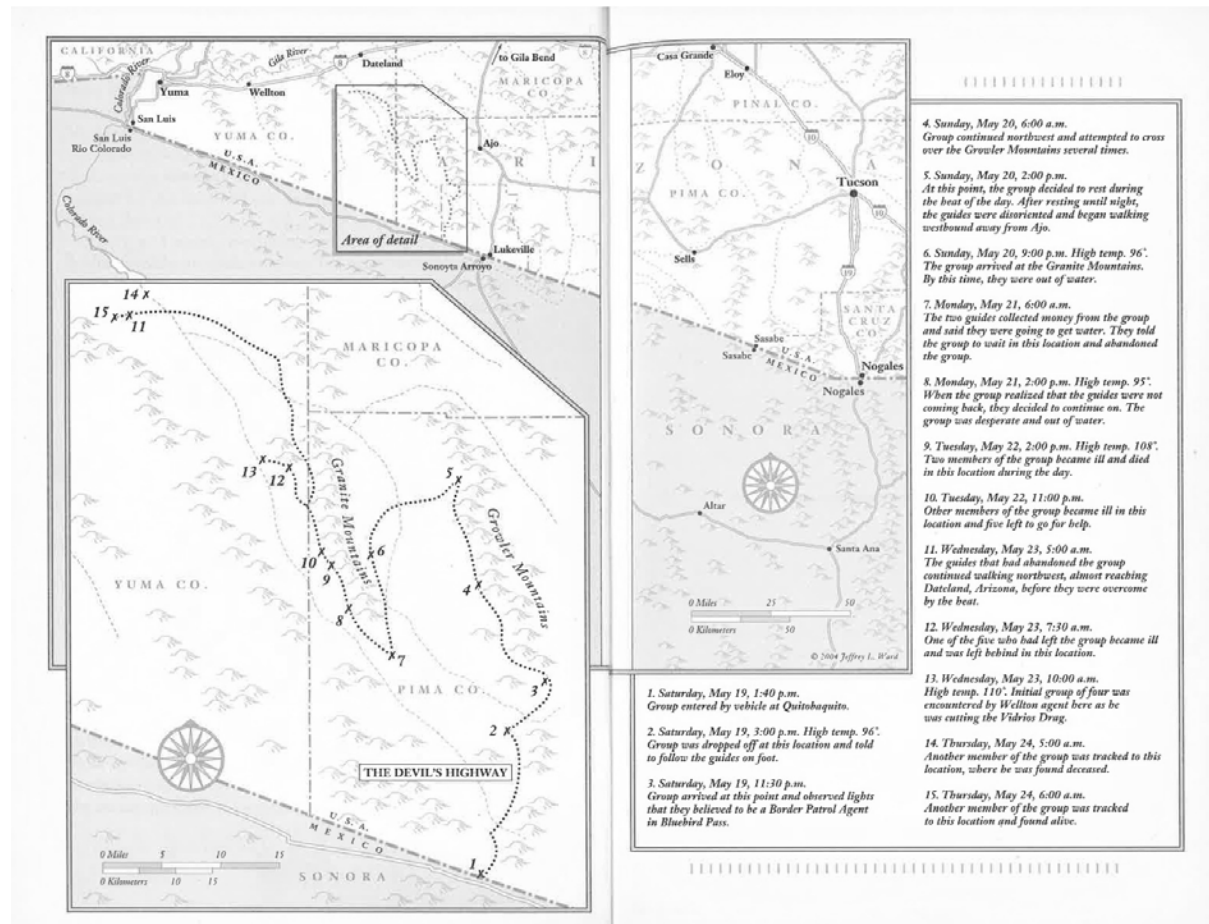


Figure 1. Illustrative map for *The Devil's Highway*. Drawn by Jeffrey L. Ward.<sup>21</sup>

political boundaries,” all in the service of a “clear and clean-cut concept.”<sup>22</sup> Stability also inheres in the itinerary that reduces the wandering of the migrants to 15 significant date- and time-stamped moments, beginning with their crossing of the international border, and ending with their deliverance in the Yuma, AZ sector of the U.S. Border Patrol.

The conventionality of the map in *The Devil's Highway* foils the instability of Urrea's narrative. Although he structures a diegetic death march, Urrea interjects, flashes forward, and doubles back temporally throughout the story. He juxtaposes the live and dead bodies of the men. He colloquializes them with their names and life-stories, and then he renders them

<sup>21</sup> Urrea, *The Devil's Highway*, xiv-xv. Ward has drawn numerous maps for literary texts; most prominently of late, he has drawn the front matter maps for the *Game of Thrones* series.

<sup>22</sup> Robinson, *The Look*, 10. Robinson devised the Robinson projection as an alternative to Mercator's projection. He was a formative figure in cartographic studies in the United States.

as anonymous John Does. He documents the men's daring odyssey to the north and then he narrates the homecoming of their lifeless bodies to Mexico. The ambiguity of the characters' lives and deaths is woven through Urrea's characterization of the Arizona/Sonora borderlands as a "haunted" region of "red shadows," and of "spirits of a dark and mysterious nature." This context circumscribes a "modern era of death" well known through the aestheticization of the American West/Mexican North/Indian Country as a place of,

Missionaries...Cavalrymen...Cowboys...Gunslingers...the worst bandits you can imagine...sinful frontier towns with bad reputations. Untamed mountain ranges, bears, lions, and wolves. Indians. A dangerous border.

Within this historical panorama, the most exigent detail is Urrea's declaration that, "When the white men came, they brought with them their mania for record keeping."<sup>23</sup> It is the problematics of record keeping that direct Urrea's narrative. In his Author's Note he acknowledges that he could not have written *The Devil's Highway* without "Border Patrol reports, sheriff's department reports, Justice Department reports, legal documents, testimonies and trial documents, correspondence, and many hours of taped interrogations and confessions." These manic records inspired Urrea's own stack of documentation, which materialized as "four leather-bound notebooks of about 144 pages each." This data was filtered until "about half of each notebook" was abstracted into the book itself. Interwoven with the "actual words" found in the documentation, are "conversations [that] were implied," and "possibilities based on recollections and inferences." Urrea's synthesis of documentation and implication into a single narrative is furthermore combined with his empirical knowledge of the "smell and sound" and "weather conditions" of the Sonoran Desert.<sup>24</sup> Among these

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 5-14.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., xi-xii.

records, implications, and sensations, Urrea lastly asserts the trope of “Desolation,” which paradoxically came “before them all.”<sup>25</sup>

Desolation and loss; the record and its implications: Urrea conditions his narrative with what literary theorist Carl Gutiérrez-Jones calls a “theorization of border culture” that pays close attention to the “contours of historiography, as well as the effects of institutional discourses.” As Gutiérrez-Jones argues, border theory must critique “the institutionalization not only of disciplinary techniques manipulating desire but also of particular epistemological constructions of what can and cannot be ‘legitimately’ known.” There is a relationship between subjectivity and epistemology that complicates knowledge work, particularly knowledge work examining “interactions at a border site that is itself provisional yet historically grounded.”<sup>26</sup> As Urrea assembles documentary prose, cultural stereotype, fictional inference, and sensory empiricism amid an “ancient religious” predicate of Desolation, he is privileging what Michel Foucault called a *tabula*, and perhaps even, as Gutiérrez-Jones spins it, a *tabula de la raza*<sup>27</sup> in his writing of a transcultural cross-border history. Urrea’s borderland of “political stupidity” superimposed over a primordial Hell-on-Earth models a critically moralized hyperborder extrapolated from a more sundry historical hyperborder. In the terms of Foucault and Gutiérrez-Jones, Urrea has drawn his own lines in the sand, and processed a critical “b/order” of things from an expansive *a priori*.

However, the map that follows the “Author’s Note” complicates Urrea’s critical hyperborder by using cartographic techniques that do not share the same order of things as the narrative prose. The map, as drawn by cartographer Jeffrey L. Ward, seems to perform none of the discursive operations carried out in Urrea’s writing process. It functions as a

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>26</sup> Gutiérrez-Jones, “Desiring B/orders,” 101-102, 111.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 99.

media object inserted *a posteriori* into the text to provide, as an appraisal of Ward's other maps have asserted, "geographic background"<sup>28</sup> for the narrative text. Ward's map conceals the conditions of its enunciation and dissembles its emergence from an archive that is "incompatible [and] discontinuous" with Urrea's text.<sup>29</sup> Urrea grounds his work in an archival hyperborder by listing his methodology and sources in the "Author's Note," but Ward's map does not foreground its *a priori*. In his "Acknowledgments," Urrea cites "U.S. Geological Survey topo maps," and the *Arizona Atlas and Gazetteer* as geographical references, but Ward's map credits no stack of sources, no hyperborder.<sup>30</sup>

Without an acknowledgment of its intertextuality, Ward's map is simply given as "a cultural technique that...*produce[s]* the territory as a political reality."<sup>31</sup> However, by interrogating the techniques of recording that "condition the emergence of statements"<sup>32</sup> that comprise a hyperborder, Urrea unwittingly belies the geographic clarity of Ward's map. Implicated within Urrea's text, Ward's map becomes an ironic instance of institutional "disciplinary techniques [and] epistemological constructions."<sup>33</sup> Urrea establishes the instability of information by meta-assessing his source material and by narrativizing the loss of migrant lives as a correlate of a loss of information. However, Ward's map assumes a stable informatic terrain, and even locates the lost migrants. In so doing, it sympathizes less with the migratory and the provisional than it does with the institutional and the secure.

As Urrea and other border theorists demonstrate, the givenness of maps—their possession of discursive authority despite their inaccuracy or obsolescence—is precisely

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<sup>28</sup> Allen, Review.

<sup>29</sup> Belyea, "Images of Power," 6.

<sup>30</sup> Urrea, *The Devil's Highway*, 226.

<sup>31</sup> Siegert, "The Map," 15.

<sup>32</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology*, 99.

<sup>33</sup> Gutierrez-Jones, "Desiring B/orders," 111.

what has allowed them to produce the borderlands as an object of state knowledge and control. Theorist of literature and Chicana studies Mary Pat Brady asserts that the United States was able to annex from Mexico the very space in which the Yuma 14 died—the so-named Devil’s Highway, south of the Gila River in southern Arizona—because of a “mistake on a map [that authorized a] (mis)taking” of land. The map in this case was the Disturnell map, which was used as the authoritative map in international treaty negotiations following the U.S.-Mexico war, despite its perceived inaccuracies. For Brady, the “contradictions and shifting interpretations” that transformed an obsolete, anatomic map into an authorized diplomatic reference showcase a “seeming aporia structuring the distinctions between the metaphorical and the material, the real and the mapped.”<sup>34</sup>

The distinctions Brady questions are the fundamentals of modern cartography. Literary and cartography theorist Barbara Belyea describes the 18th-century competition between Cook and Vancouver’s “records of exploration” and the “theoretical geography” of the French Académie Royale as an “assert[ion of] hegemony” whereby Cook and Vancouver rationalized the map by concealing “myth as science.”<sup>35</sup> The aporia of myth and science—or metaphor and material—in the map remained pertinent in the 1848 U.S.-Mexico treaty negotiations. As historian Paula Rebert recounts, Nicholas P. Trist, the U.S. treaty commissioner, “did not think highly of [the Disturnell map],” for precisely the reasons that Cook distrusted the non-empirical mapmakers of 18th-century Europe. He imagined that the map had been, “suddenly got up, as the mere speculation of an engraver or bookseller, to meet the demand in our country for maps of Mexico.” Rebert further recounts that after searching for “more reliable geographic information” of the region, the treaty commission

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<sup>34</sup> Brady, *Extinct Lands*, 13. The entire portion of U.S. territory traversed by the Yuma 14 would have been well within Mexico according to the original treaty agreement, which marked the border in the Gila River.

<sup>35</sup> Belyea, “Images,” 6; “Myth as Science,” 1-13.

was “unable to find a satisfactory authority.”<sup>36</sup> In this historical incident, the aporia that Brady identifies inheres first in the use of a speculative map of an unfamiliar region to produce a political reality, despite the epistemological distrust expressed for the object by its users. The aporia continues in the United States’ eventual rejection of the boundary points determined by the map, despite its commissioners’ insistence on utilizing it. In the final outcome, the aporia is most evident in the United States’ failure to find authoritative geographic information of the region despite its own claims to authority over the region.

This historical border-drawing scenario demonstrates that the confused distinctions between the metaphorical and the material were actually what produced the agency of the Disturnell map. Although it was considered semantically dubious, the material presence of the Disturnell map—in the absence of other geographic authorities agreeable to the U.S.—allowed it to enter diplomatic discourse. When its discrepancies caused empirical confusion, the map continued to mediate, this time as a record of falsehood and procedural error that inspired a new compromise: a border drawn further south into Mexican territory. In this saga of media, the Disturnell map “as a representation” was “deterritorialized by the map as a medium.”<sup>37</sup>

In considering the aporia between the metaphorical and the material it becomes evident that the map’s materiality comprises its own a priori, regardless of symbolic disputes. In an order of things, maps made of paper occupy a shared archive, whether they claim empirical reality or are indicted as fantasy. Furthermore, in their emergence from the archive, both scientific and fantastic maps are equally re-markable, and a single map can become re-marked as either rational or irrational depending on its usage. For instance, the Disturnell

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<sup>36</sup> Rebert, *La Gran Línea*, 6.

<sup>37</sup> Siegert, “The Map,” 16.

map was twice re-markable for the United States. First, it was re-marked as truthful, and second, it was re-marked as false. Critical attention to the re-markability of maps is necessary to combat the givenness of the map as a tool of hegemony and political control. Every map correlates to hyperborders that inform it and deform it. Re-markability is the medial potential of maps to be productively deformed, to reference different hyperborders, to critique systems of power knowledge. However, as with the Disturnell map, re-markability is also the medial potential of maps to be re-informed in ways that continue or extend dominant regimes. In what follows, I examine how new inscription technologies are being used to strategically re-mark cartographic logics, and to extend U.S. sovereign power through a cryptic hyperborder.

### **III. Materials and Symbols of Power**

“Hope began to glimmer,” Urrea writes, that in the wake of the early 2001 “sacrifice of the Yuma 14,” “a kind of border accord loomed”—a “Border Perestroika,” an “open border.” But by the end of that year, the migrants’ sacrifice was itself sacrificed, when the United States, in responding to the events on September 11th, revitalized their “sovereign right to regulate who may or may not enter their territories,”<sup>38</sup> in the context of the nascent and now ongoing “War on Terror.”<sup>39</sup> It is within this context that this writing occurs. Media theorist Rita Raley asserts that since the coordinated instantiation of Operation Blockade in 1993, and the passage of NAFTA in 1994, U.S. governmental strategy in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands has reflected “a complex imbrication of territorial and capitalist logics of power.” Raley adds that the addition of “remote-detecting sensors, remote-controlled

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<sup>38</sup> Spener, *Clandestine crossings*, 14.

<sup>39</sup> It should be noted that in 2013 President Barack Obama declared the end of the use of the term “Global War on Terror” and re-qualified U.S. military action as “a series of persistent, targeted efforts to dismantle specific networks of violent extremists that threaten America.” See <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2013/05/23/obama-global-war-on-terror-is-over>

cameras, and unmanned autonomous vehicles” to this mix points to “the intensification of both biometric and territorial borders.” This security hyperborder—which “is at once material and symbolic”—is characterized by the instrument of the fence and the *show* of force. “Simulat[ions of] control” serve to mediate a sense of security over proverbial swarms of immigrants.<sup>40</sup>

The governmental triangulation of symbolic and material regulation, securitization, and territorialization is a function of governmentality, as Foucault outlined it, and as philosopher Judith Butler has recently critiqued it. In analyzing the late “resurgence of sovereignty into the field of governmentality,” Butler argues that governmentality is not a political end, and does not supersede sovereignty, but rather is a “diffuse set of strategies and tactics” concerned “with the maintenance and control of bodies and persons” that allows for and “may depend upon...reanimated anachronism[s]” of power “unmoored from [their] traditional anchors.” Butler analyzes the methods by which the “policies and departments” and “managerial and bureaucratic institutions” that governmentalize the United States have tactically “suspend[ed] law” in order to open a space for the “ghostly and forceful resurgence of sovereignty.”<sup>41</sup>

The territorial logic of power identified by Raley inheres in the ghostly arche-sovereignty revitalized by governmentality. As Foucault asserts, “sovereignty capitalizes a territory,” whereas “discipline structures a space,” and “security [plans and regulates] a milieu in terms of...a series of possible events.”<sup>42</sup> While these power operations move in a series, it is not a successive, linear historical series, but rather a “correlation” of

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<sup>40</sup> Raley, *Tactical Media*, 34-35.

<sup>41</sup> Butler, *Precarious Life*, 52-59.

<sup>42</sup> Foucault, *Security*, 20.



“technologies” which fluctuate relative to unique social and political problematics.<sup>43</sup>

Governmentality is a networked, ensemble power operation that provides—through “institutions, procedures, analyses, calculations, and tactics”—a flexible means of incorporating the techniques of sovereignty and discipline and tactically redeploying them.<sup>44</sup>

Cartographic media are central to governmental power operations. Significant technologies in today’s security hyperborder are remote sensing and drone technologies. These technologies correspond to epistemic shifts in cartographic techniques, in that they utilize satellite mapping and digital Geographic Information Systems. Unequal access to these new technical media is a subtext of Urrea’s narrative, which uses geographic coordinates reported by the Border Patrol as digital signatures for the Yuma 14. The effect of this informatic rhetoric—”Reyno Bartolo. N. 32.23.16/W. 113.19.55. Face up, green pants, green socks. Deceased”<sup>45</sup>—is the ability of the reader to simulate her own control over geographic terrain. The coordinates of the dead can be entered into Google Maps, and a viewer can locate the final resting place of Reyno Bartolo on a global scale, or can zoom in until it is only a noisy image of indiscriminate desert. Furthermore, one could theoretically travel to these geotagged sites by utilizing a GPS equipped device. The thought of such an experiment epitomizes the fantasies of access in borderlands. Border Patrol agents can, and did, travel to all of these geolocations by air-conditioned SUV and/or helicopter. At the same time, B.A.N.G. Lab’s Transborder Immigrant Tool discourse experiment proved that in today’s state of emergency, merely the suggestion of limiting migrants’ risk by providing them with mobile digital map devices feeds a hawkish discourse of allegiance or treason,

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 8,9.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>45</sup> Urrea, *The Devil’s Highway*, 173.

friend or foe.<sup>46</sup>

The affective practices and institutional techniques of control that comprise the security hyperborder recall Brady's concept of the aporia structuring the distinctions between the metaphorical and the material. They can therefore be seen as new correlations of old symbolic materials. This is not to say that nothing has changed culturally or technologically, but rather that institutions and problematics are engaged in creative feedbacks. In the U.S.-Mexico borderlands this means that the modern security scenario of "interdiction," which "depends on state infrastructural capacity to identify and prevent movement regarded as illegitimate,"<sup>47</sup> has changed in practice and meaning, as infrastructures have fluctuated, and identificatory semantics have shifted. The ability of the postmodern security state to reproduce itself as the same symbolic entity again and again in the face of hyper problematics is a profoundly digital ability, one in which governmentality controls populations by breaking them down into information, and thus recombines itself, as a symbolic government of the people relative to that information. In relation to digital, informatic state control, the border fence—the "'real' material border with its powers of exclusion"<sup>48</sup>—functions analogically, as a resurrected territoriality, because it provides a material analogue of sovereignty, and creates "order from chaos."<sup>49</sup> The security hyperborder is therefore an assemblage of old and new, analog and digital, historical and speculative.

This imbricated digital and analog hyperborder is a reminder that although the

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46 Nadir, "Poetry, Immigration." In the early 2000s the b.a.n.g. lab at the University of California San Diego (UCSD)—led by artist Ricardo Dominguez—devised a navigation program/ poetry platform that could run on cheap cell phones. The lab proposed providing migrants with these phones to help them safely find their way through deserted border areas using poetic orientation. Although the project never extended beyond a prototype stage, its prioritization of human connectivity over the security of national borders caused Dominguez and the b.a.n.g. lab to be "investigated by three Republican Congressmen, the FBI Office of Cybercrimes, and [UCSD]" in 2010.

<sup>47</sup> Spener, *Clandestine Crossings*, 14-16.

<sup>48</sup> Raley, *Tactical Media*, 40.

<sup>49</sup> Critical Art Ensemble, *Digital Resistance*, 77.

“analogic model has died a surprisingly quick death in the field of information and communications technology,”<sup>50</sup> analogic materials are used regularly in conjunction with digital systems, a situation now well-exemplified in contemporary musical and fine art practice, and of exigency for the digital humanities. It is also an indication that amid the digital systems of the information economy, there are some practices that do not have a place from time to time, but that may resurface, given the fluctuations of governmentality. For example, historian Rachel St. John historicizes the U.S.-Mexico border fence in a chronicle of anachronisms and redeployments, and shows that despite developments in information technology and security techniques, the fence seems to eternally return—here as a pastoral animal barrier, there as a repurposed internment camp fence.<sup>51</sup> The fence’s construction of late resembles an emergence of analog territorial materiel—as identified with the Great Wall of China, or the Berlin Wall—that accompanies the floating sovereignty transcending through governmentality to fight the War on Terror.

### **Old Maps, New Deployment**

A practice with no place that must “manipulate events to turn them into ‘opportunities’”: This is philosopher Michel de Certeau’s definition of *tactics*. De Certeau opposes tactics to *strategy*, which utilizes a “proper” place as “the basis for generating relations with...competitors, adversaries, ‘cliénteles,’ ‘targets,’ or ‘objects’ of research.” Strategy is available to a subject with an “institutional localization.” Tactics on the other hand allow subjects to turn “to their own ends forces alien to them.”<sup>52</sup> Considering these definitions, the archive is a strategic location for historical material. It is an institutional,

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>51</sup> St. John, *Line*, 198-204. St. John cites the first government border fence as a range fence built by the Bureau of Animal Industry to interdict “fever-tick infested cattle.” A 1940s fence in the Imperial Valley was “salvaged from a Japanese Internment Camp.” For more on border fencing, see Chapter 3.

<sup>52</sup> Certeau, *Practice*, xviii-xix.

proper place for generating relations with objects of research. As a governmental technology, however, the archive is also imbued with tactical potentiality. Although the archive “govern[s] the power of what can be stored legally and technically, and what will be forgotten,” it also stores the seeds of historical discontinuity and rupture.<sup>53</sup> The archive provides the materials for what Walter Benjamin called a “blast[ing] out of the continuum of history;”<sup>54</sup> but this possibility depends on the re-markability of the historical material. In order to rupture the teleology of history, historical material must be made to operate again, not merely as an index of the past, but as a viable tool in the “time of the now.”<sup>55</sup>

In the context of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, re-markable historical objects can reveal the artifice of historical narratives that operate through an enforcement of “strategic forgetting and remembering.”<sup>56</sup> Assembling different re-markable historical objects could also help in the analysis of the ghostly anachronisms redeployed by governmentality. At the same time, Butler asserts, using the work of Giorgio Agamben, that governmentality functions through the potential exposure of all people to the suspended zone of bare life. In this case it may be fruitful to consult materials evidencing risk and precarity. In what follows, I present maps that address the “constellation which [today’s] era has formed” with ghostly territorializations and police states.<sup>57</sup> First I examine an archived, obsolete 1849 settler colonial map of the Trans-Mississippi West that was re-marked a century later, with biopolitical logic, by the antiquarian historian and bookseller Glen Dawson. Second, I critically read a 1964 promotional road map for Harold’s Club of Reno, Nevada, which proposed a fictive Pan-American world that never came to exist. Third, I analyze a map

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<sup>53</sup> Ernst, *Digital Memory*, 196-199.

<sup>54</sup> Benjamin, “Theses,” 261.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>56</sup> Brady, *Extinct Lands*, 60.

<sup>57</sup> Benjamin, “Theses,” 263.

series from the early 2000s by the artist Pedro Lasch, who tactically redeployed the retrograde technology of the folding map in order to pay witness to the precarious life of migrants in the post-September-11th borderlands. As a collection, these re-markable maps model a critical hyperborder amid temporal geographies.

#### **IV: A Hyperborder of Re-Markable Maps**

##### **Advantageous Communication**

In his recent monograph, *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance*, literary and Indigenous studies theorist Mark Rifkin conceptualizes sovereignty as a process of “*chronogeopolitics*.”<sup>58</sup> This means that sovereignty is a practice instrumentalized through a hyperborder consisting of temporal *and* spatial media that are displaced, supplanted, or customized in correlation to political actors and events. Rifkin is concerned with the ways in which settler colonial actors take the temporal and spatial structures of colonization for granted in their everyday existence. Or, in other words, how “settler geographies, modes of inhabitation, and forms of selfhood are lived as the ‘ready made’ basis for action in the world.” To explore this problematic, I am going to examine how antiquarian historian Glen Dawson used critical cartography to historicize settler colonialism. I argue that Dawson’s experimentations with anachronism and the material predicates of state media, constitute a confrontation with what Rifkin calls “*settler common sense*,” or the nonnative act of taking of settler colonial occupation as given. In his text, Rifkin draws attention to the problem by which critiques of settler state normativization can be counterhegemonic, and yet affirm settlement discourse, by pitting “aspects of settler

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<sup>58</sup> Rifkin, *Settler Common Sense*, 30, 86.

occupation against other aspects of settler occupation.”<sup>59</sup> Following Rifkin, I would like to examine Dawson’s work for the ways in which it both decenters and upholds the structures of settler colonialism in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

Bearing the epithet “the bookman as historian,” Glen Dawson was the proprietor of Dawson’s Book Shop—a now defunct antiquarian bookstore in Los Angeles—for over 50 years. As the son of Ernest Dawson—who, it is acknowledged, circulated the first rare book catalogue in Los Angeles, in 1904—Dawson’s birth “into [a] world of books, libraries, and special collections” is difficult to imagine today.<sup>60</sup> Dawson’s life—he is still alive, at 103 years old—coincided with the so-called Golden Age of fine printing in California, from the early 1930s until the 1960s. Dawson participated in this wave of material cultural production as a salesman, a curator, an editor, and a publisher. A partner in his father’s business by the 1930s, Dawson moved into limited-run publishing in the 1940s, focusing his efforts on the printing of texts relating to California and Western history, including numerous fine reprintings of historic journals and chronicles in his *Early California Travels* and *Baja California Travels* series. In his cultural position as an antiquarian, Dawson mediated between a predominately white, nonnative, middle- to upper-class polity of scholars, businessmen, and aficionados, and a more motley collection of historic ephemera indexing the eras of Spanish, Russian, Mexican, and Anglo settlement in the West. In so doing, one could say that Dawson provided material reifications of the territory as a given for a certain class of settlers. Or, in a *chronogeopolitical* sense, Dawson’s Book Shop’s production of a limited-run, localized, historical canon, in Los Angeles, California, in the mid-20th century,

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 38, xvi, 26.

<sup>60</sup> Andrews, *Glen Dawson*, 14, 16.

gave nonnative Californians access to a network of places and encounters in local history that would not have been previously available to them.

While making a given cultural hegemony tangible for California settlers, Dawson's work also "blast[ed] open the continuum of history."<sup>61</sup> By removing documents of settlement from the archive and pressing them into service as materials *of* his own time, Dawson trafficked in a delicate, yet productive anachronism that provides a glimpse of territorial settlement in operation. To be able to buy, in Los Angeles, in 1949, a new, finely printed and bound copy of a book called *Los Angeles in 1849, a Letter from John S. Griffin, M.D.*, for two dollars (that would be \$20 today), is to witness a localized settler culture double back on itself, review itself, renew itself without the explicit mandate of the state, and ultimately promote itself, in the sense of moving itself forward in time. There is a risk in this process, in that it ruptures the notion of the settler-state as always-already "formed whole," and it draws attention to the technologies by which settlement structures itself. Or, worded differently: To turn a personal letter written by an early Anglo settler in Los Angeles into a bound commodity item a century after its writing, is to create a rather abnormal and anachronistic text that could reprove the givenness of settlement.

In terms of chronogeopolitics and settler sovereignty, Dawson's critical antiquarianism is most evident in the re-markable folding map he produced for his 1950 reprint of *A Journal of the Overland Route to California and the Gold Mines*. Lorenzo D. Aldrich, a doomed forty-niner—who, prior to being a gold-seeker, had been a "popular young merchant" from Lansingburgh, New York—wrote the original text in 1849. In republishing Aldrich's Gold Rush journal, Dawson described it as "one of the rarest of overland narratives," and cited it as, "but the first of a small but growing shelf of books by

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<sup>61</sup> Benjamin, "Theses," 262.

those pioneers who came across New Mexico and Arizona to California in 1849.”<sup>62</sup>

The temporality in Dawson’s phrase is notable, for the “growing shelf of books” is a description of what he perceived to be a novel, mid-20th century antiquarian interest in preserving the surviving texts of Gold Rush migrants. Exemplifying what Ernst calls a “double bind in antiquarian data processing between distance and empathy, resulting from the gap between the physical presence and the discursive absence of the past.”<sup>63</sup> Dawson playfully conflated the precarity of the material texts and their authors. He noted at one moment, “Fortunately, some of the travelers, in spite of their arduous experiences, kept diaries that survived.”<sup>64</sup> Regarding Aldrich, Dawson acknowledged the opacity of his historical existence, a situation that his journal barely but thankfully remedied. “Little is known of Aldrich,” Dawson wrote, “other than what appears here and even his book narrowly escaped oblivion.”<sup>65</sup> While this sentiment draws attention to the importance of Dawson’s antiquarian curation, it also puts Dawson’s reprint in critical resonance with the past, because in Aldrich’s case, it was in fact, only the diary that survived. The original publisher’s remark states, in the place of Aldrich’s truncated text,

The diary is here brought to an abrupt conclusion...While at Chagres Mr. Aldrich was attacked by a prevailing malady, prostrating both mind and body, and incapacitating him from continuing the narrative...During his homeward passage from Panama the disease exhibited yet more alarming symptoms, and when he once more returned to his friends, it was only in time to receive at their hands the last sad rite of burial...The

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<sup>62</sup> Dawson, “Note,” vii. It should be noted that among other aesthetic revisions to the original book, Dawson omits an exclamation point from the title. The original title of the book, as printed in 1851 by Alexander Kirkpatrick, in Lansingburgh, NY, was *A Journal of the Overland Route to California! and the Gold Mines*. Perhaps for Dawson, in Los Angeles a century later, California was no longer exclamatory.

<sup>63</sup> Ernst, *Digital Memory*, 43.

<sup>64</sup> Dawson, “Appendix,” 87.

<sup>65</sup> Dawson, “Note,” vii.



unfinished Journal is, however, submitted to the perusal of his friends, in the belief that they will discover in it much of interest, notwithstanding the unfinished and hasty manner in which it has been written, and the occurrences of chasms which the narrator himself alone could fittingly supply.<sup>66</sup>

In his reprint, beneath this, Dawson re-marked, “[Lorenzo Aldrich died January 13, 1851 at the age of thirty-two, only two weeks after his return from California.]”<sup>67</sup> In this way, Dawson’s reprint of Kirkpatrick’s printing of Aldrich’s manuscript “acknowledge[d] the past as artifactual hardware, so to speak, upon which historical discourse operates like a form of software.”<sup>68</sup> In other words, Dawson applied historical discourse—and particularly historical data—to the hardware of Aldrich’s corpus, and to a certain degree, reprogrammed it. Consistently, Dawson appended quantifications. Aldrich’s age upon dying is one example. Another example would be the addition of extra-diegetic data about the number of people who crossed the “Colorado River at the junction of the Gila” in 1849 (12,000, “about half Americans and half Sonorans,” according to one Benjamin Hayes, who heard this data from “Col. Corrasco of the Mexican army,” on “the last day of 1849”).<sup>69</sup> Amid Dawson’s concise but rich historiography—including the reminder that the gold-rushers taking the southern route were risky border-crossers, whether from the United States, Mexico, or further afield—what stands out are people and numbers, i.e. populations. Dawson focused his historical program on the 12,000 southern border-crossers of 1849, particularly on the approximately 6,000 Anglo-Americans, specifically on the diarists among them, and even more precisely, on their diaries. Dawson listed, described, and gave brief author biographies for 25 Gold

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<sup>66</sup> Aldrich, *A Journal*, 47-48.

<sup>67</sup> Aldrich, *Journal*, Glen Dawson, ed., 85.

<sup>68</sup> Ernst, *Digital Memory*, 43.

<sup>69</sup> Dawson, “Appendix,” 87.

Rush diaries in the “Appendix” to Aldrich’s journal. He also deployed the names of 11 diarists in a re-marked antique folding map that he distributed with Aldrich’s journal.

Dawson did not summarize the map in his annotations, but he briefly glossed it in a citation in the “Appendix,” stating, “The large map of Creuzbaur in the pocket of this edition is reproduced from the Huntington Library copy.”<sup>70</sup> This is a rather elliptical statement, because it is not a “map of Creuzbaur,” or at least, it is not *only* a map of Creuzbaur. It is actually a reproduction of Robert Creuzbaur’s 1849 “Map to illustrate the most advantageous communication from the Gulf of Mexico and the Mississippi Valley to California and the Pacific Ocean,” onto which Dawson overprinted, “in red...the dates at which various diarists of 1849 passed some 13 checkpoints along the Southern Trail to California.”<sup>71</sup> While it may be a little pat to say that Dawson’s publications all function as returns of the repressed, his transformation of Creuzbaur’s map is particularly uncanny, in that Dawson dredged up a list of forty-niners from the edge of what he called, in his notes, “oblivion” and installed them onto an outdated map as seemingly familiar representatives of the process of settlement. He then occulted his old/new map to a folded packet in the back of his reprint of Aldrich’s journal, and evacuated the map’s novelty in all of his descriptions of it. In finding and opening the map, the reader encounters a familiar tool of settlement remarked as unfamiliar and anachronistic.

Briefly historicizing Creuzbaur in the “Appendix,” Dawson noted that he was not a diarist, but rather a compiler of a guidebook, called *Route from the Gulf of Mexico and Lower Mississippi Valley to California and the Pacific Ocean*. Dawson additionally noted that despite Creuzbaur’s text being “the only known 1849 guide to the southern route,” its

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>71</sup> Wheat, *Mapping the Transmississippi West*, 76. It is significant that Dawson re-marks Creuzbaur’s map before the publication of Wheat’s magisterial survey, and is noted by Wheat for his innovation.



Figure 2. Robert Creuzbaur's 1849 map of the Trans-Mississippi West.

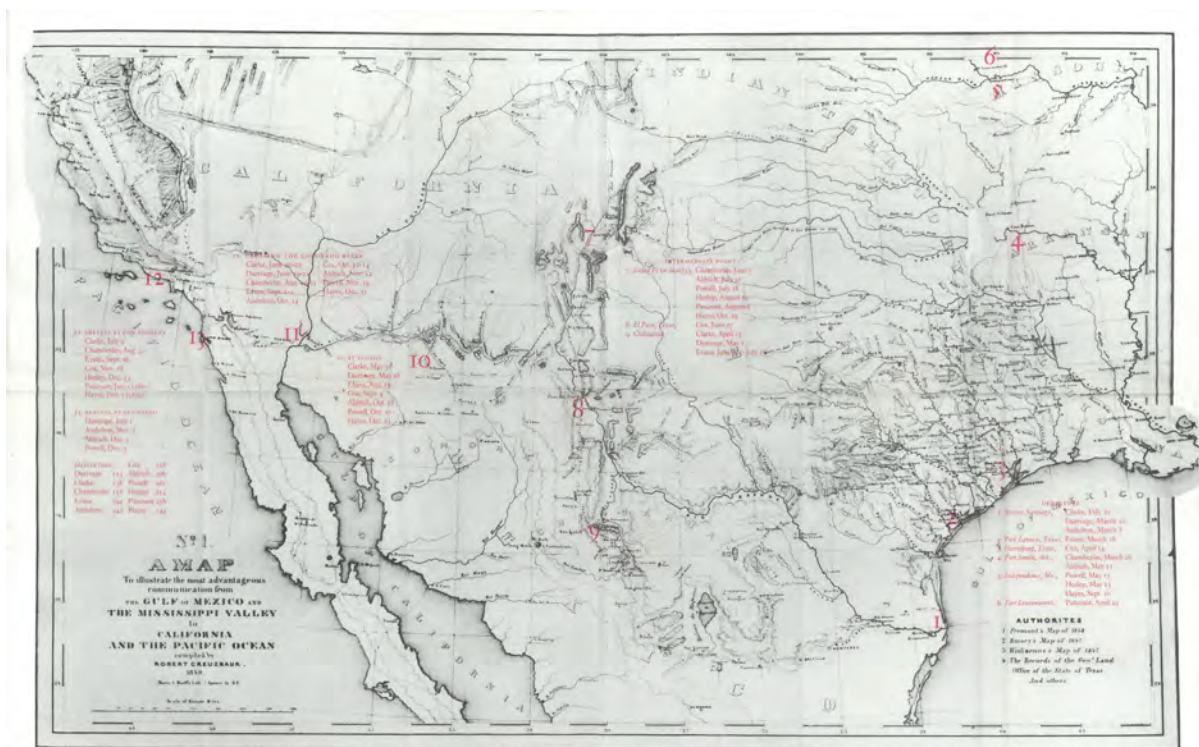


Figure 3. Glen Dawson's 1950 re-marking of Creuzbaur's map.

discursive importance was hard to measure because, “the diarists had more frequent access to the government reports of Abert, Emory and Cooke, than to Creuzbaur.”<sup>72</sup>

Historian Carl I. Wheat, however, describes Creuzbaur as a subtle, yet significant presence in the “mushrooming market” of Gold Fever, during which “maps and books poured out of the bookstores.”<sup>73</sup> In Wheat’s narrative, mapmakers and writers were also braving the wilds, albeit not of precarious crossing, but of mercantile survival. While Dawson described “large numbers of immigrants,”<sup>74</sup> Wheat notes the “great speed,” and dizzying minutiae of “‘book trade’ advertisements,” in which prices, quantities, and distances fluctuate prismatically. For instance, a period advertisement read:

This map has just been received from Washington, whither it was sent from San Francisco. Price in sheets, 25 cents. \$14 per hundred. \$2 per dozen; in pocketbook form 37 cents a piece; \$25 a hundred.<sup>75</sup>

If an adventurer/diarist like Lorenzo D. Aldrich experienced oblivion narratively, through a climactic corporeal decline, a cartographer/mediator like Creuzbaur experienced it informatically, through a relay of signals. On the record, among Creuzbaur’s successful signalings, there are also misidentifications like “J. De Cordova’s new and correct Map of the state of Texas, as drawn by R. Creizbaur [sic], principal draftsman of the General Land office.”<sup>76</sup> However, Aldrich’s success was also informatic, if he is reduced to his diary (his corpus), which made a successful relay as a coded packet, and continues to do so today.

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<sup>72</sup> Dawson, “Appendix,” 89.

<sup>73</sup> Wheat, *Mapping the Transmississippi West*, 64.

<sup>74</sup> Dawson, “Note,” vii.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 64. I argue that such a misspelling would limit Creuzbaur’s informatic fitness; to use a contemporary example, ‘Robert Creizbaur’ has no result on Google, whereas ‘Robert Creuzbaur’ proliferates. That said, standards of spelling and modes of retrieval are not necessarily commensurate between the mid-19th century and today. It should additionally be noted that Creuzbaur is a recorded figure in a range of discourses. Surveyor, draftsman, inventor, Texas Confederate, and longtime bureaucratic employee are the many signs over his name.

Dawson's re-marking of Creuzbaur's map informatizes Aldrich's narrative while it narrativizes the instrument that was Creuzbaur's map. As attested to by the advertisement quoted above, maps themselves become narrative objects when they move. A map that has made a journey from San Francisco, to Washington, to New York with its information intact is a map with history and credibility. Aesthetically or informatically, it may be more or less useful than another map, but as Wheat's historiography shows, utility was as much a rhetorical and commercial matter—"This is no catch-penny affair, but a veritable survey taken by a U.S. Surveyor and sent on to Washington"—as it was an aesthetic or mathematical matter.<sup>77</sup>

A map's narrative correlates to its user; a map in motion is an actor that produces a cartographic subject. Dawson sets his re-markable map into motion by confining it to the pocket in the back of Aldrich's journal, just as Creuzbaur's original was enclosed in his guidebook. The reader must proceed through a series of mechanical steps—finding, removing, unfolding, and opening—to use the map. The reader becomes a subject complicit in the re-marking of the map by opening and closing the document in the "more or less obvious order," of its unfolding, which deepens the "fold lines [into which] lines and points on the map disappear," and further erodes the "fragile creases" indicating the map's vulnerability.<sup>78</sup>

Looking further into Dawson's re-marking process allows for an examination of how his work can, in Rifkin's terms, be "counterhegemonic while also recirculating settlement as a constant."<sup>79</sup> By blasting a map from 1849 out of the archive and populating it with the names of travelers who, in speculation, may have used it, Dawson reprogrammed

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<sup>77</sup> Wheat, *Mapping the Transmississippi West*, 68.

<sup>78</sup> Jacob, *The Sovereign Map*, 84.

<sup>79</sup> Rifkin, *Settler Common Sense*, 26.

Creuzbaur's map in tandem with Aldrich's journal. As a historic object, Creuzbaur's map had been one in a suite of folded maps that outlined routes for forty-niners to take to the California goldfields. Affirming the critical cartography dictum that the map is, in fact, the territory, Creuzbaur's map functioned, to quote Rifkin, as a "structuring template," or a "plug-in," that mediated settlement sovereignty to its users.

Dawson's re-marking makes it possible to appreciate Creuzbaur's map as the structuring template for settlement. Looking through Dawson's re-markings to Creuzbaur's base map a reader can see faint "lines [that] have been drawn from St. Louis and Cairo to Little Rock whence a line extends first southwesterly then westerly, to Paso del Norte (El Paso), labeled 'Pacific R.'"<sup>80</sup> and can understand those lines as the network of "advantageous communication," attested to in the original legend. However, Dawson's informatics cause the eye to move further, and to travel in three dimensions over the map—east to west, north to south, and back and forth among its palimpsestic layers. With her eye becoming temporally engaged, a reader might begin a process of calculation, and then move from counting to telling, to extrapolating a narrative from the field of information. For instance, it can be seen on Dawson's map that each diarist spent a varying amount of time on the road. Also, the map's spatial organization indicates separate trajectories that are qualitative—in terms of terrain and location—and quantitative, in terms of travel time. It can be deduced that one name—indexing one diarist—took less *days en route* from East to West than the other names: Durivage, who took 113 days to travel from Brazos Santiago to San Diego, via Chihuahua and Tucson. Evidently most travelers left in spring, and arrived in fall or winter.

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<sup>80</sup> Wheat, *Mapping the Transmississippi West*, 76.

While Creuzbaur's map served as a kind of software in the machinery of settlement, Dawson's retrieval of it revealed that it had become hardware in time, or a technology taken for granted in the structure of settlement. Dawson's reprogramming of the map—or his own plug-in—remarked the map as something it could not have been before: an overland timetable, in which the regulation of bodies as information is made possible through calculation. In some sense, this innovation bends the course of history, for while the innovation Dawson provided was anachronistic in his own time, it remained eternally on the horizon for Creuzbaur. In his guidebook, Creuzbaur did not include timetables, but rather distance tables for contextualizing his maps. Time was at the mercy of physical distance, topography, and contingent hazards. As Aldrich's journal and Creuzbaur's guidebook both attested, *communication* in the Trans-Mississippi west was riddled with noise. However Creuzbaur anticipated a new channel:

In examining the map of North America, in search of some plausible way, the disinterested eye cannot fail to discover the advantages offered by a route passing from the Gulf of Mexico, by Paso del Norte on the Rio Grande, to San Diego on the Pacific. The distance, compared with that of any other route north of this is short; the climate is mild, and the route remains unobstructed, the whole year, by snow and frozen rivers—which can be said of no other route north of this. Its local advantages speak greatly in its favor, and it passes mostly through our own territory. The purchase of some territory along the south bank of the Gila, would remove the only objection which could be urged against the construction of a national *rail-road* along this route; an objection, however, which would be of little weight against the adoption of this route as the best and safest road known; and as such it is worthy the

notice of capitalists, emigrants, travelers, and traders.<sup>81</sup>

Dawson connects with Creuzbaur ironically through the figure of the diarist migrant, who has been reduced to information. Dawson looks back from 1950 Los Angeles as Creuzbaur looks forward from 1849 Austin and the two cartographers meet in the archive, where they collaboratively chart a proleptic governmentalized space. Although Aldrich's reprogrammed journal continues to dramatize the hazards of settlement, Creuzbaur's reprogrammed map selects out bears and mosquitoes, cold, gusty weather, fickle animals, Indians, violence, and death, and reduces them to temporal delays. Thus, while Dawson's experimentation with settlement media threatens to destabilize the givenness of settlement by reopening the chronogeopolitical question of sovereignty, it ultimately renews settlement by deferring sovereignty to biopolitical considerations. Dawson's re-markable map resettles territory as a realm of security.

### **The Logical Western Route**

Two *New York Times* articles from 1953, printed a matter of months apart, indicate the paradoxes of governmentality by highlighting its structures of regulation and police, and its "organization around the problem of the market and commerce."<sup>82</sup> One, from January 7, 1953, announces, "Hemisphere Road is Nearer Reality," and includes the subheads, "Pan American Highway Grows With Mexican Network as the Chief Contribution," "Wild Terrain Overcome," and "Gaps in Alaska-to-Rio Route Rapidly Being Filled Out by Many Nations' Work."<sup>83</sup> The other article, from April 16, 1953, states, "'Wetbacks' Cross at Two a Minute," and includes these subheads: "Mexican Workers' Illegal Entry Rose Sharply Last Month—74,695 Were Arrested," "Linked to Narcotic Trade," and "Sudden Increase in Marijuana and

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<sup>81</sup> Creuzbaur, *Route from the Gulf of Mexico*, 3 (italics mine).

<sup>82</sup> Foucault, *Security*, 440.

<sup>83</sup> Pierce, "Hemisphere Road."



Heroin Traffic in West Parallels Alien Influx.”<sup>84</sup> Each article describes a rapid quantitative increase—one is progressive, the other is transgressive—within the intertwined context of Pan-Americanism and the Good Neighbor Policy.

In these two articles, the phenomenon being quantified is *traffic*. The problematic described is how to effectively police circulation of people and objects. In Foucault’s analysis, this problem becomes the apotheosis of the security state, because governmentality must manage the population as a living coexistence of individuals who each need “a certain amount of food and air to live,” and who “work alongside each other,” all amid “a space of circulation.” Foucault adds that this management must ensure the felicity and convenience—indeed, the happiness—of these coexistent individuals.<sup>85</sup> This process can be seen as a historic fluctuation away from the precarious migrant narrative of Aldrich to the informatic environment as co-created by Creuzbaur and Dawson, and then further, to a completely circulatory environment, in which security functions through feedback and circulation, against the anachronism of migration. For Aldrich in the 19th century, the journey was a means to a boom or a bust. For the 20th-century figure of security—the motorist—being caught in the network of circulation is promoted as a pleasurable “end in itself, not a means of getting somewhere.”<sup>86</sup>

In canonical U.S. history, these paradigm shifts are also progress narratives. The most influential of these was Turner’s frontier thesis, in which a growing population pushed a line of civilization westward through “free land.” In Turner’s scenario, Aldrich and his ilk were civilized westward movers, and information networks followed them as progressive, national refinements of vernacular techniques. Setting aside Turner’s thesis, and glancing again at the

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<sup>84</sup> Hill, “Wetbacks Cross.”

<sup>85</sup> Foucault, *Security*, 326, 327.

<sup>86</sup> Meinig, *The Shaping of America*, 30.

*New York Times* articles it that opened this section, it can be seen that in the mid-20th century, national and transnational communication systems were highly noisy, discontinuous, disorienting, and discontented, marked by “sudden and alarming surge[s],” “influx,” “illegal entrants,” “social problems,” “constant pressure,” “difficult terrain,” “obstacles,” “impasse,” and “gaps.”<sup>87</sup>

In the *Times* articles a type of “lo-tech,” or even “no-tech” “netwar” is represented,<sup>88</sup> in which insurgent forces swarm the “the southern frontier of the United States.” There is a rhetorical articulation of what Brady calls, “the fantasy that a nation on one side of the border exists in one phase of temporal development, while the nation on the other side functions at a different stage.”<sup>89</sup> Both newspaper articles use the “gateways on the southern frontier” as lenses. One article surveys, through the border, “the mighty approaches of the Pan-American Highway,” which are indexed as signs of a civilizing Mexico, in which “living standards [rise] as highway efficiency develops.”<sup>90</sup> The other article employs the border as “an abjection machine,” and renders migrants as “unintelligible (and unintelligent), ontologically impossible, [and] outside the real and the human,”<sup>91</sup> by re-marking them as “alien” and “wetback.” For the human reader’s edification, the term “wetback” is even defined as deriving from a migratory “tradition” of entry. The migrant is spectralized as a “sudden” and a traditional invader; Mexico is naturalized as a chaotic and a developing infrastructure. In either case, the United States is related to Mexico in a hierarchical binary. One article relates that the effect of the migrants will be to “depress...conditions.”<sup>92</sup> The other article describes

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<sup>87</sup> Pierce, “Hemisphere Road”; Hill, “Wetbacks Cross.”

<sup>88</sup> Raley, *Tactical Media*, 56.

<sup>89</sup> Brady, *Extinct Lands*, 50.

<sup>90</sup> Pierce, “Hemisphere Road.”

<sup>91</sup> Brady, *Extinct Lands*, 50.

<sup>92</sup> Hill, “Wetbacks Cross.”

how Pan-American highways extend “from” the United States, which “foots the biggest bill” to build them.<sup>93</sup> Where the United States is secure, Mexico is precarious.

As if to refute images of wild swarms and specters of migration, circulation through the interstate interior of the United States was mediated through what cartographic historian James Akerman calls a “sugarcoated rhetoric” emblazoned on “hundreds of millions of maps” annually printed from the 1930s to the 1960s.<sup>94</sup> The good life imagined on these maps was tied to the progressive discourse of the Good Roads movements of the early 20th century, in which the exigencies of transportation took on a moral character, and in which road systems resemble social networks. Bad roads caused commercial isolation, kept people apart from each other, disabled the centralized schooling of children, and even signaled a kind of global savagery. As the President of the Lincoln Highway Association, Henry B. Joy, put it, “Good roads are our greatest civilizing force [and] Roads in the United States are said to be the worst of any civilized country in the world.” Joy’s examples of great highway cultures were imperial (Roman, Incan, Chinese), his rhetoric was progressive and populist, and his mantra was connectivity.” The reason that [our] various highways have not been a success from a national view-point,” Joy opined, “is because they have not been properly linked together.” In these regards, his hope was always for a “logic[al] route,” which he defined as a “route [that] follows the path of directness with least grades.”<sup>95</sup>

For Joy a logical route was the Lincoln Highway, “planned and mapped out” as the “first transcontinental thoroughfare...from New York to San Francisco.” Its logic inhered in the fact that it was planned and mapped, and not carved out of the land capriciously or organically. It did not “wind in and out, guided wholly by local sentiment in each

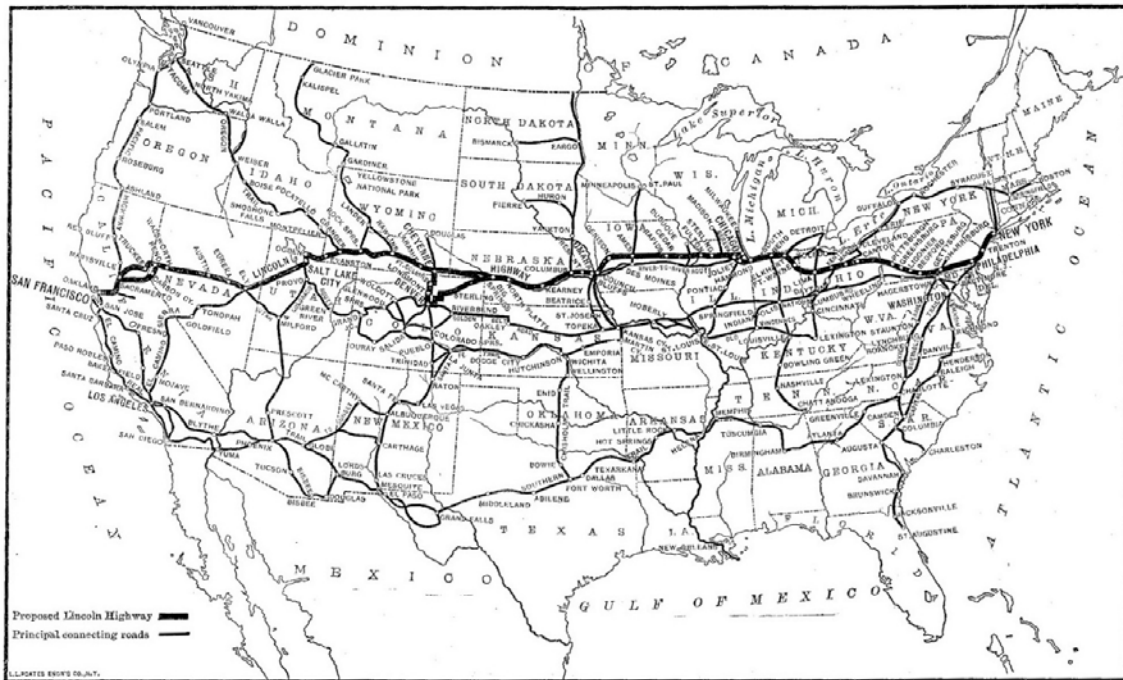
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<sup>93</sup> Pierce, “Hemisphere Road.”

<sup>94</sup> Akerman, “Twentieth-Century American Road Maps,” 189.

<sup>95</sup> Joy, “Transcontinental Trails,” 160-166.

community, retarded by the lack of progressiveness of others.” It was also important for Joy to reiterate that the road’s reality was *literally* reified in its mapped existence: “The Lincoln



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**Figure 4. “It’s on the map.” The Lincoln Highway in Joy’s 1914 article for *Scribner’s*.**

Way is not a proposed plan. It is on the map.”<sup>96</sup> Although cartographic theorist Denis Wood might protest, for Joy, the map was not a proposition; the map was the territory. This is perhaps the only way to explain the aporia within Joy’s article, for he includes an illustrative map, upon which a thick black trunk road is labeled “Proposed Lincoln Highway.” If, for Joy, the Lincoln Highway is *not* a proposition because it is *on the map*, and yet, if, on the map, it is signified *as* a proposition, then there must be a disjuncture in signification between the cartographic material and the cartographic sign. As if to prove Siegert’s claim that “the materiality of the map interferes with its contents,” the “Proposed Lincoln Highway” ceases to be a proposition, and becomes a real object—a territory—in the moment of its mapping.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Siegert, “The Map,” 13.

Joy's assertion that the map was the ontological condition for the Lincoln Highway is essentially an argument that roads and trails are not merely ontological things in the Earth but rather discursive marks that are subject to knowledge orders. For further illustration of this, I present a 1964 road map, distributed gratis by Harold's Club casino, on behalf of the Okanogan Cariboo Trail Association. The map, entitled, *Pan-Am West International Highway Alaska to Mexico as proposed by—Okanogan Cariboo Trail Assn.*, performs an ironic act akin to Joy's—it rhetorically suggests a highway and materializes that highway in the same space. Pan-Am West, in this case, is a proposition, and yet not a proposition, because it is already "on the map." The language used to describe the highway in the legend of the map is not conditional: Pan-Am West, it states, "combines a fast, non-congested roadway with modern accommodations and excellent service facilities staffed by friendly, courteous attendants." While one side describes "Pan-Am West," the other side of the map explains the map itself. "This map," it states, "points out the logical western route connecting Alaska and Mexico." Numerous actions are described as occurring *on* the map; at the same time the map is characterized as active and rational, in that it points out a known truth—i.e. a "logical route." The map is a territory, and a guide that produces a subject with rational knowledge of the territory.

Akerman notes that promotional cartography dominated cartographic publication in the mid-20th century. I wish here to foreground a technical definition for *promote*, as in, "to move something forward," rather than "to encourage," in the same way that *propose* would be to "put something forward," rather than "to suggest." Both of these words signify the

basic culturally constitutive act of “introducing a distinction,”<sup>98</sup> and impart agency to the map. In this, I differ slightly from Wood, who theorizes maps *only* as the propositions of

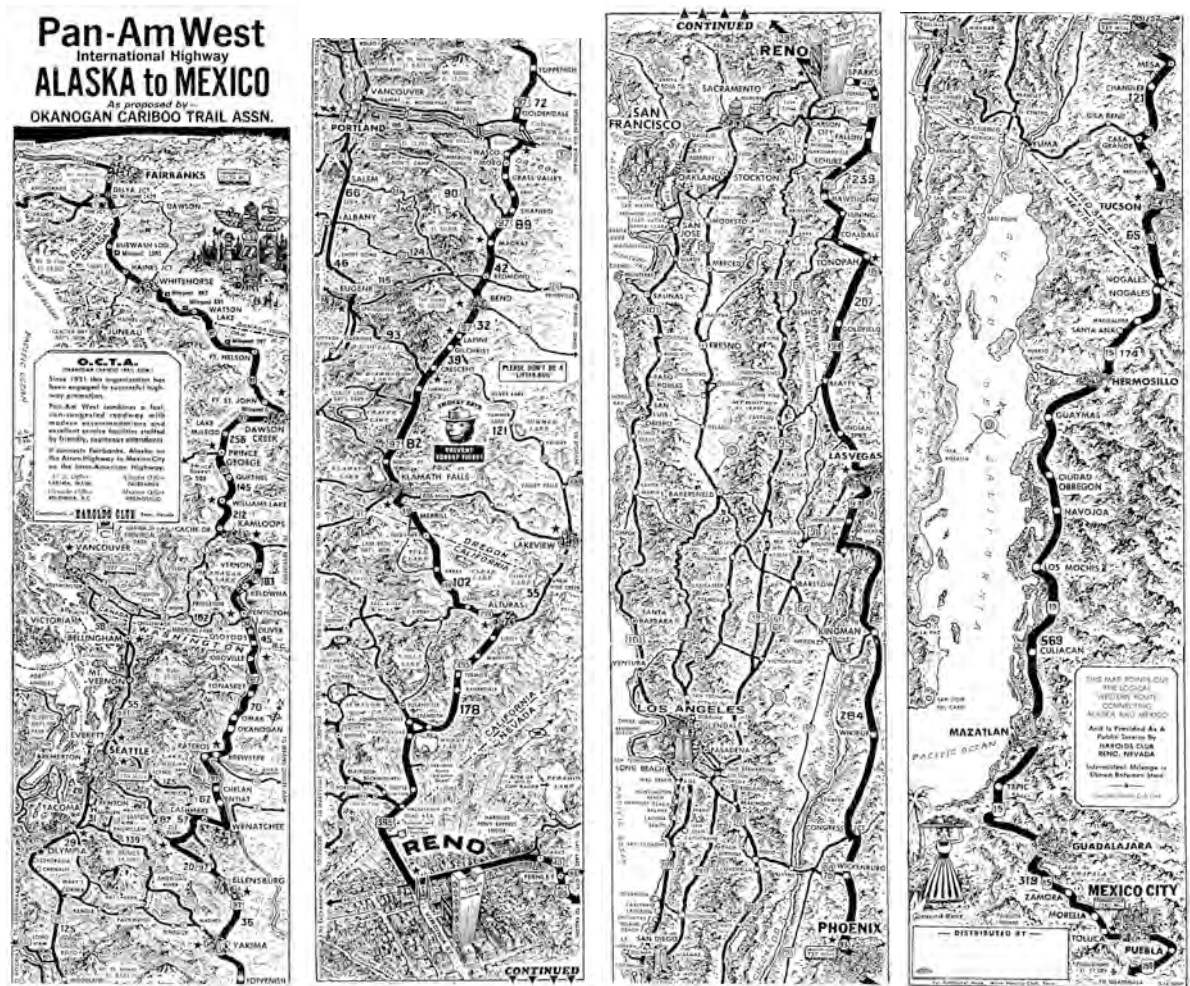


Figure 5. The O.C.T.A.’s proposed Pan-Am West trunk of the Pan-American Highway.

cartographers and networks of power.<sup>99</sup> I argue for the material agency of the artifactual map itself as a proposer and promoter that introduces propositions or promotions.

Gerald A. Eddy, who “worked in the greater Los Angeles Area from the 1920s

<sup>98</sup> Siegert, “Doors,” 8. Siegert’s claim: “Every culture starts with the introduction of distinctions.”

<sup>99</sup> I am not against the relation Wood outlines between institutional power and cartography, and the subjectivity dissembled in the production of supposedly objective knowledge spaces. Rather, I want to recognize the possibility of extra-authorial agency possessed by the map itself.

onward as an artist and commercial cartographer,” drew the O.C.T.A. map.<sup>100</sup> However, the map has outlived its patrons, including Eddy, Harold’s Club, and the O.C.T.A. Regardless of historic shifts, the map continues to promote a worldview characterized by anatopic repetitions, fanciful scales, and fictive propositions. On the front of the map, Harold’s Club sits at the bottom of the page, towering above the city of Reno, at a nexus of the long, winding Pan-Am West route, which has extended very nearly from the curved edge of the globe. Relative to a reader, Harold’s Club appears as the furthest-forward object in the perspectival landscape. On the back of the map, this promotional operation is repeated, and Harold’s Club’s seven-story tower<sup>101</sup> extends to the top border of the map, establishing a two-dimensional and three-dimensional superiority. These graphic propositions compete only with three legends on the map, which appear to be superimposed over the landscape, and place certain terrains under erasure. The legend containing the mission statement of the O.C.T.A. covers Tlingit and Haida territories in the U.S.-Canada borderlands (perhaps totem poles drawn to the northeast are meant to commemorate the erasure?). Two more legends, at the bottom of the map, elide sketchy wilderness to the north and southwest of Mexico City. One of these legends, marked “Distributed by,” even makes a space for re-marking the map.

It is this re-markable legend that allows for what Ernst calls the “coming out of media.” By marking the map in the “Distributed by” space, a user becomes a mediator in the map’s specific play of marks and in its *a priori* (this includes the United Lithographers of America, who made their mark, and indeed, all of the marks). As interpellated by the map, a re-marker becomes not merely a co-author, or an authorizer, but a distributor. By re-marking

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<sup>100</sup> Griffin, *Mapping Wonderlands*, 189. Eddy (1890-1967) drew a number of different regional road maps for Harold’s Club, but the O.C.T.A. map is the only speculative one that I have found.

<sup>101</sup> Bledsoe, “Harold’s Club.” Bledsoe writes: “In 1954 the [(Harold)] Smiths completed a seven-story, \$4 million “tower” to...expand gaming facilities, but it was too narrow and cramped to fully achieve this purpose.”



the map, the distributor not only places herself “on the map,” but also becomes the commercial force that disseminates the map, presumably through the networks that are also marked on the map. Chief among these networks are roadways, with proposed transborder connections. A marked distributor also evinces her access to international commercial non-

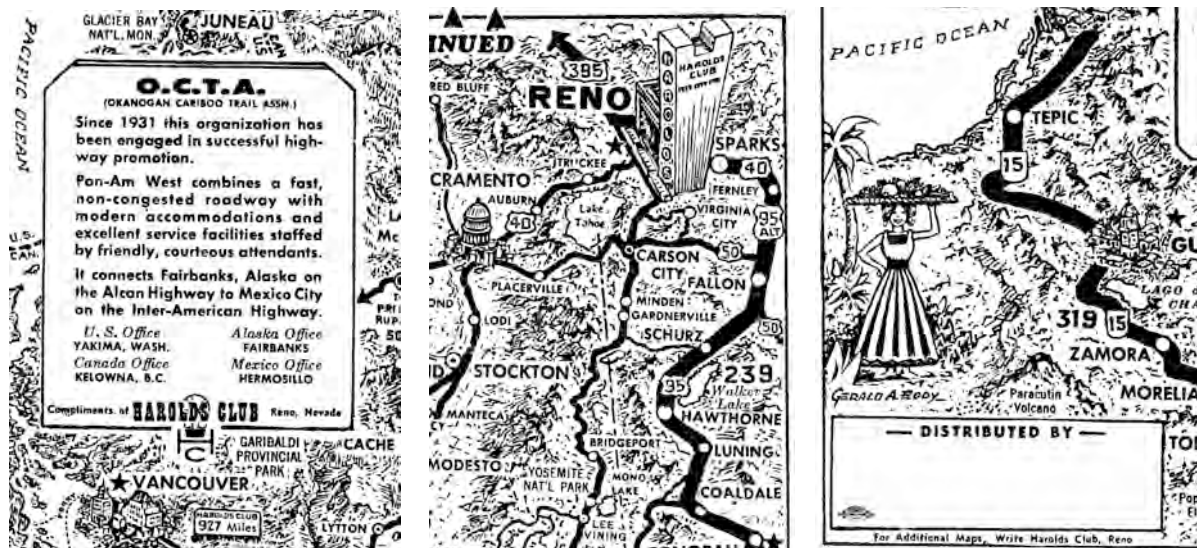


Figure 6. Map details, left to right. A legend; a promoted Harold's Club; a re-markable space.

governmental organizations, such as the O.C.T.A., which claimed offices in “Fairbanks,” “Kelowna, B. C.,” “Yakima, WA,” and “Hermosillo.” The O.C.T.A., for its part, distributed Pan-Am West promotions “with permission from the Pan American Congress,”<sup>102</sup> which had itself established international good-neighbor policies under the sign of “collective security.” One of these policies, the Pan-American Highway, was backed by an “honor roll of American engineering, finance, government, and automotive related industry,”<sup>103</sup> and was a

<sup>102</sup> “Pan American Tag Cited for Inland West Highway,” *The Spokesman-Review*, October 8, 1963.

<sup>103</sup> Meinig, *The Shaping of America*, 324-325. Meinig relates a dissenting view expressed by an “Argentine intellectual” in the 1920s with an allusion to the writings of José Martí: “...the urge to expand and conquer has grown to the point where the classic ‘America for the Americans’ actually means ‘America—our Latin America—for the North Americans.’”



chief project of so-called collective security, or as Foucault would call it, police.<sup>104</sup> Re-marking the O.C.T.A. map as a distributor ostensibly connected a map user to a global network of commercial and governmental actors. The “Distributed by” space on the O.C.T.A. map allows a map user to sign her name to the logical route of hemispheric security.

The imbrication of roadways with collective security had inhered in another important theme of the Good Roads movement—namely, that good roads would distribute solid citizenship. By enabling “Americans” to intimately connect with each other across great distances, and by disseminating empirical knowledge of “America’s natural beauty and culture, its history, industry and products,” good roads symbolized national progress, and catalyzed networks of communication and control.<sup>105</sup> As the O.C.T.A. map indicates, the mediality of the free road map was intrinsic to this process, for it not only promoted and proposed “logical routes” of commerce and citizenship, but also covertly assigned its carriers as distributors of a secure, symbolic hyperborder. The O.C.T.A. map shows in its remarkable “Distributed by” legend that to distribute the map is to be “on the map.”

### **Vulnerable Bodies**

In order to create a surface smooth enough for the tracing of telltale signs, the U.S. Border Patrol *drags* the desert corridors along the western U.S.-Mexico border every few days. An inscription device consisting of a “bundle of five car tires attached to a frame,” which is itself called a “drag,” and is attached to a truck, accomplishes dragging. The truck drags the drag in east/west approximations, in order to receive perpendicular north-south cross-signs. The dragged corridors cannot be considered “good roads,” but rather a kind of

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<sup>104</sup> In this context, it is significant that the Mexican portions of the Pan-American Highway were completed *without* American construction aid. It should also be noted that Pan-Am West was never completed.

<sup>105</sup> Akerman, “Twentieth-Century American Road Maps,” 155.

signal network through which undocumented migration can be policed. The corridors form a palimpsestic, dynamic map, registering marks and re-marks, and containing mobility. If good roads index citizenship and civilization, then drags index interdiction and insecurity. Good roads connect America's "sacred places," but drags divide "Desolation" and the Devil's Highway. However, although they are not good roads, to be on the drags is to cross into the security system. To be off the drags is to be insecure, precarious, or to be—as Urrea said of the Yuma 14—"off the map."<sup>106</sup>

However, Urrea means "off the map" in relation to the Border Patrol and to national security. He does not mean off of *a map*, of *any map*. In describing the migrants' own sense of the space through which they were moving, Urrea imagines them to be uncertainly examining a "blank map," or a "vast empty map."<sup>107</sup> On the other hand the coyotes in Urrea's narrative "navigate [the Devil's Highway] by the mountains," and, after dark, "[orienteer] by the glow of the Mohawk radio towers and the vapor lamps of the Mohawk rest areas." If coyotes are forced to guide migrants through new terrain, there are always old "locals ready to show them the ropes."<sup>108</sup>

Anthropologist David Spener asserts that the "minimum startup requirements for coyotes" who wish to practice professional migration in the South Texas corridors are, "knowledge of river-crossing points," and "knowledge of roads/trails on Texas side." Spener's transcriptions of interviews with coyotes contains no mention of maps. Rather, what coyotes require in order to guide migrants is localized spatial knowledge, imparted through networked relations, and operated through the physical body. In the absence of a material map, the coyote utilizes a cognitive map. As a migrant Spener interviewed in 1999

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<sup>106</sup> Urrea, *The Devil's Highway*, 28-30.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 108, 139

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 81-83.

acknowledged, “el coyote es él que conoce el camino mejor que uno [the coyote is the one who knows the way better than you do].”<sup>109</sup>

That said, migrants and their guides are undoubtedly also “on the map” of transnational, Pan-American good roads. Crossing the border does not only happen on foot, but also by car, van, semi. The journeys are no less dangerous for being “on the map,” as one coyote reported to the Colombian newspaper *El Tiempo*:

Primer viaje. 12 personas en una camioneta. “Me dieron un mapa y me fui manejando hasta Nueva York dejando gente.” De 45 a 50 horas. En todo el trayecto no hay paradas. “Si te para la Policía, te echa a la migra. Todo ese tiempo comen sólo una hamburguesa, porque son ‘pollos’, pos no les puedes dar de tragar mucho, son ‘pollos,’ tienen que tragar lo que tú les des.”

[First trip. Twelve people in a van. “They gave me a map and I drove until New York where I dropped the people off.” About 45 to 50 hours. On the whole journey not a single stop. “If the police stops you, it throws you to the *migra*. The whole time they ate only one hamburger, because they are ‘pollos,’ so you can’t give them much to eat, they are ‘pollos,’ they have to swallow what you give them.”]<sup>110</sup>

Spener documents the “Victoria Tragedy,” which occurred almost two years to the day after the deaths of the Yuma 14. In this event, “somewhere between 75 and 100 [migrants] climbed into the back of a tractor-trailer rig...on the outskirts of Harlingen, Texas,” in order to be driven to Houston. In the course of the journey, the temperature inside the trailer rose from 98.6° F to “over 170° F.” Nineteen people died in what Spener calls “the single most

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<sup>109</sup> Spener, *Clandestine crossings*, 123, 219 (his translation).

<sup>110</sup> Tangarife, “Diario” (my translation).

lethal clandestine journey undertaken by migrants in the history of the United States,”<sup>111</sup>  
trumping what Urrea had called, “the largest death event in border history.”<sup>112</sup>

The horrible grandeur of these narratives, while importantly calling attention to the precarity of migrants, also reduces border-crossing to a series of subaltern success stories and well-publicized death events that can be statistically calculated in governmental border metrics of security. A statistical picture for 2001, the year of the Yuma 14 “death event,” shows that the 14 deceased migrants of Urrea’s narrative were among the 136 human corpses recovered in southern Arizona from October 1, 2000 to September 30, 2001.<sup>113</sup> In the same period in 2001, the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics reports that 2,648 train passengers, 174,718 bus passengers, 23,726,701 personal vehicle passengers, and 8,994,847 pedestrians entered Arizona through its six official ports.<sup>114</sup> Auto-smuggling events complicate this picture of access, and indicate that even secure transportation statistics must contain insecure riders, but the scene remains one of informatic control, ruptures of narrative trauma, and invisible, “successful” migration.

I wish to counterpoise Mexican-American artist Pedro Lasch’s *Guías de Ruta* (or Road Maps, as Lasch anglicizes them) against statistically ruled governmental hyperborders, good roads of mobile citizenship, and the outlandish exceptions and undocumented bodies that correlate to them. In order to, in his words, “[present] and [distribute] of a new map of the American continent,” as “a monument to the epics of migration,” Lasch printed his *Guías*

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<sup>111</sup> Spener, *Clandestine crossings*, 5-7. Although I admire Spener’s work, I find his phrasing problematic for the purposes of historicizing ‘clandestine’ migration. Certainly there are archives in which grand American narratives like Manifest Destiny, to name one, are recorded as tremendously “lethal clandestine journey[s].”

<sup>112</sup> Urrea, *The Devil’s Highway*, 31.

<sup>113</sup> Coalición de Derechos Humanos, “Missing Migrant Project.” In the last ten years, numbers of remains have risen and fallen year to year, but they have never been less than 136.

<sup>114</sup> “Border Crossing/Entry Data: Query Detailed Statistics,” Research and Innovative Technology Administration (RITA) • U.S. Department of Transportation (US DOT), [http://transborder.bts.gov/programs/international/transborder/TBDR\\_BC/TBDR\\_BCQ.html](http://transborder.bts.gov/programs/international/transborder/TBDR_BC/TBDR_BCQ.html) (accessed April 5, 2013)

*de Ruta* as series of maps that would themselves migrate to different destinations, over a number of years.<sup>115</sup> Each map departed from the Global South and was distributed across the U.S.-Mexican border on its way to a metropole in the United States. Its distributors were migrants traveling to New York, Los Angeles, or North Carolina. Each migrant was given two maps. Upon their successful arrival in the United States, they were asked to return one map to Lasch and keep the other for themselves.

The maps are records of the crossing, but they are neither narrative records—like Aldrich’s journal—nor are they informatic chronicles or itineraries. Although they are called “Road Maps,” they don’t indicate logical routes or advantageous communications; they contain no Pan-American highways, much less the Lincoln Highway. Furthermore, although they nearly approximate a kind of ‘blank’ or ‘empty’ map, as Urrea imagined migrants consulting, the *Guías de Ruta* are not blank maps. Neither in a sense of disoriented viewing, nor in the Cook/Vancouver spirit of positivist “honesty,” do Lasch’s maps frame blankness. Rather they name a place—Latino/a America—and represent it on paper in an established cartographic projection, in an opaque red color, which has been smeared, erased, and redistributed with a capricious logic. Additionally, this space of representation enfolds itself, an operation which renders the map portable, and incidentally, re-marks it with an ad-hoc graticule.

Lasch’s *Guías de Ruta* function as re-markable texts, ordered by the logical functions of Western cartography, and disordered by the forces that confound or contradict those functions—noise, decay, fantasy, fiction. The *Guías de Ruta* are recognizable as maps because of their solid Mercator projection. In their slightly askew toponyms, there is a

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<sup>115</sup> Lasch, “Games.”



5 | AN ATLAS OF RADICAL CARTOGRAPHY | Pedro Lasch, Vicencio Marquez-Guias de Ruta/Route Guide (#1 New York), 2003/2006 LATINO(A) AMERICA series

**Figure 7.** Pedro Lasch, *Vicencio Marquez-Guias de Ruta/ Route Guide (#1 New York)*.

recognizable critique of national identification and U.S. hegemony. In the absence of greater detail, however, one might question their utility. How could they possibly—in the sense of Holub’s poem—remarkably help the migrants find their way? Would they just be more things they carried?

Nevertheless, if they were carried and returned—and of the first series of 20 maps bound for New York, Lasch received 8 in return<sup>116</sup>—the maps provide a material frame for the oppressive and impressive markings of migration. In this way, the maps delineate what Judith Butler calls a “frame for understanding violence,” but their processual nature subverts the decisive, event-of-violence based framing that, Butler theorizes, “precludes certain questions [and] certain kinds of historical inquiries,” and functions “as a moral justification for retaliation.”<sup>117</sup> Lasch’s *Guías de Ruta* were violently re-marked. In the event of their material survival, the maps came to *include* those marks as questions, and as invitations to historical inquiry. The *Guías de Ruta* and the distributors that they produce as subjects subvert the combined discourses of population control, traumatic eventualities, and migratory invisibility. By distributing the maps, and thus by being *on* the maps, the participating migrants successfully avoid police, survive violence, and—if they hold on to one map while returning the other—keep and leave a visible, material record of their crossing.

This is not to say that these re-markable frames of violence don’t preclude certain social questions in being read as deformed texts. Chiefly, one wonders, as philosopher Alejandro de Acosta puts it, “how Lasch approached the migrants...how, with what words and gestures, he proposed that they become bearers of these objects.”<sup>118</sup> Likewise, one wonders about the last journey the bifurcated maps took once they arrived—perhaps by U.S.

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<sup>116</sup> Lasch, “Latino/a America Selections,” 78.

<sup>117</sup> Butler, *Precarious Life*, 4-5.

<sup>118</sup> de Acosta, “Latino/a America,” 73-74.

Mail, along a logical route, amid institutional security. The *Guías de Ruta* so dissemble their network operations, that one puzzles over the relationality and sociality behind their mediality. As the museum-bound afterlives of the maps indicate, and as their continuing travel from institution to institution shows, the *Guías de Ruta*, despite their prolepsis of precarity, have become relatively secure, and presumably, insured material *objets d'art*.<sup>119</sup>

However, if distribution of the map puts one “on the map,” then Lasch’s *Guías de*



**Figure 8. Pedro Lasch’s *Guías de Ruta* on display at the Queens Museum of Art, 2006.**

*Ruta* are remapping the Americas, or as Lasch puts it, “changing what “America” means, and what it means to be “American.”<sup>120</sup> In looking at the map through this frame, I see that in the absence of logical routes and advantageous communications, there is a proposition of an

<sup>119</sup> The works have been displayed at the Queens Museum of Art, the Branch Gallery in Durham, NC, and the Sheila C. Johnson Design Center at Parsons University, in New York City, among other locations.

<sup>120</sup> Lasch, “Latino/a America Selections,” 78.



“entire continental mass whose borders are geological (the oceans) and not geopolitical.”<sup>121</sup>

Beyond that, I see the abstract semiology of Western cartography, and an amorphous, ambiguous connectivity. There is a mathematical net of folds, and two scratched, distorted, noisy, but named landmasses connected by a narrow isthmus—an isthmus which was severed by the United States’ building of the Panama Canal in 1914, and which contains, in the undeveloped Darién Gap, the last barrier to the Pan-American highway.

## V. Conclusion

I began this chapter with an unanswerable question, namely whether the migrants described in *The Devil’s Highway* could have survived if they had possessed a map. In diverting my analysis from this question, I hope to have shown that a map should not be taken as a given, objective document, but rather as a conditional, contingent text, a correlate of archival knowledge, political structures, and cultural techniques. The terrain that overwhelmed the Yuma 14 and that has claimed thousands of other *Americans* in the post-NAFTA, post-Operation Gatekeeper era, is among the most mapped landscapes in the world. The region comprises a cartographic hyperborder that extends back for centuries in paper archives, into big data, and infrastructurally, into outer space. The Yuma 14 did not die because they were without maps, or because they were “off the map.” I imagine that the migrants carried exceptional maps that nobody will ever see. The maps analyzed in this chapter provide critical reproof to the notion that maps are objective, truthful records of spatial knowledge. Maps produce subjects who determine the meanings of space and place. I am trying to advocate in this chapter that those subjects must be critical of the so-called “power of maps” and its re-markable potential.

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<sup>121</sup> de Acosta, “Latino/a America,” 73.

## Chapter Two

### Land in Formation: Imagining, Writing, and Encoding Indigenous Geographies

A map is a symbolized representation of geographical reality, representing selected features or characteristics, resulting from the creative effort of its author's execution of choices, and is designed for use when spatial relationships are of primary relevance.

—International Cartographic Association, "Definitions," 2011

Western European maps are used to steal Indian lands, to *exclude*, to imprison, to cut off, to isolate even segments of the human world from one another. Maps are the only physical evidence of boundary lines. Before constructing fences or other markers for a boundary, the map-maker-surveyor is consulted. My great grandfather was a surveyor for the U.S. government, and some way [*sic*] he mapped the boundary line in favor of Laguna Pueblo over Acoma Pueblo. But one of the Bibo family (Lebanese traders) was also a land surveyor who had married an Acoma woman, and this Bibo surveyed boundaries in favor of the Acomas over the Lagunas.

—Leslie Marmon Silko, interview with Laura Coltelli, 1993

#### I. Introduction: Definitions

"What is a map?" is the question that brackets any critical inquiry into cartography. A question without a single answer, it is either an invitation to reduce discourse, or an opportunity to open a view on what Walter Mignolo calls "a conflict of knowledges and structures of power."<sup>1</sup> Answered reductively, the question "What is a map?" can be used to manage knowledge-power by limiting access to the field of cartography. Left open, the question 'What is a map?' can expose power relations concealed at the site of mapping, and can critically extend cartographic discourse across disciplinary lines. The purpose of this chapter is—in line with Mignolo's terminology—to address the conflict of knowledges and structures of power inherent in the map. In this way, this chapter complements my first chapter. While Chapter One examined Western map forms, this chapter focuses on Indigenous mapping techniques. Likewise, while the purpose of Chapter One was to critically undermine the givenness of cartographic progress narratives, the purpose of this

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<sup>1</sup> Mignolo, *Local Histories, Global Designs*, 16.

chapter is to examine the necessity of cartography as a theoretical and practical—albeit fractured—discipline for demarcating Indigenous sovereignties.

The separation of so-called Indigenous and Western mapping is not a distinction that I uncritically assert, but rather, a distinction that has been instantiated as a function of what Mignolo calls—referencing Anibal Quijano—the “coloniality of power.” In this framework, cartography emerged as an unequivocal, scientific practice from a world system of power inaugurated by colonialism and “implied and constitute[d]” through, among other things, “the classification and reclassification of the planet population”; the development of “an institutional structure...to articulate and manage such classifications”; “the definition of spaces appropriate to such goals”; and “an epistemological perspective from which...the new production of knowledge could be channeled.”<sup>2</sup> Through these processes the map became a colonial instrument that “projected...European local knowledge and histories...to global designs.”<sup>3</sup> This means that the European map became a medium through which coloniality could “impose itself,” “[subalternize] other kinds of knowledge,” and universalize European perspectives.<sup>4</sup> Mignolo argues that these dynamics must be critiqued by “reinstall[ing] the colonial difference,”<sup>5</sup> so that a map can be properly identified as a “space where the coloniality of power is enacted.” From there, a map can become not merely a universalist, global design, but rather, a site of struggle, or a “space where the restitution of subaltern knowledge is taking place,” a “space in which *local* histories...meet *local* histories,” and a

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 16-17.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 25.

“space in which global designs have to be adapted, adopted, rejected, integrated, or ignored.”<sup>6</sup>

My general argument in this chapter is that the map is a ground upon which epistemological—or, as Mignolo would have it, *gnostic*<sup>7</sup>—struggles are being waged, and that these struggles serve as a metonym for the larger project of Indigenous self-determination. More specifically, I argue that the variety of these struggles indicate the extension of a colonial hyperborder as—in Mignolo’s terms—a global design with a digital and analog presence. By engaging in cartographic self-determination, Indigenous communities act to adapt, adopt, reject, integrate, or ignore this colonial hyperborder. More importantly, by using Indigenous epistemologies—or gnosis—to develop cartographic systems that serve their communities and critique the colonality of power, Indigenous cartographers are in the process of constructing an alternate hyperborder that can assert Indigenous sovereignties—or “set the record straight”—as it also produces what Zuni artist Jim Enote calls “mutual understanding and peace making.”<sup>8</sup>

Mignolo states that the “colonial difference” is an outcome of the colonial “transform[ation] of differences into values.”<sup>9</sup> Scholarly work on the historic role of Indigenous cartography and spatial knowledge in the Americas indicates that settler colonist subjects strategically valued and devalued Native mapping techniques. I assert that this arbitration process is itself embedded in the common cartographic query, ‘What is a map?’

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., xxv. I propose that the re-marking of maps examined in the first chapter could be considered a method of reengaging the map as a “site of struggle.”

<sup>7</sup> Part of Mignolo’s project in *Local Histories/Global Designs* is to reassert *gnosis* as a signifier for ‘knowledge’ that intervenes in the dialectic of epistemology and hermeneutics. Arguing that those two modes of knowing are inextricably implicated in the colonality of power, Mignolo proposes gnosis, a more general term for knowing, as a way to recognize and demarcate subaltern knowledges.

<sup>8</sup> Enote, “A:shiwi,” 8.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 14.

Answering this question is an act of assigning values to differences; various answers are assertions of value systems, or what may alternately be termed, cultural affiliations.

Barbara Belyea has shown that defining the map in ways that foreclose Indigenous knowledge and promote Euro-American values is a process that has moved from the realm of colonial exploration and conquest into the realm of academic knowledge work. In her 1992 article “Amerindian maps: the explorer as translator” Belyea critiqued late 20th-century scholarship on “Amerindian maps...[for drawing] attention to native cartographic convention” at the same time that it “[relied] on the assumptions and standards of European cartography as universal measures of accuracy.”<sup>10</sup> Belyea drew a parallel between 19th-century sailor and explorer Robert Hood’s qualification of Native mapping as “local knowledge,” and scholar G. Malcolm Lewis’ more recent definition of Indigenous maps as “map-like pictographs.”<sup>11</sup> This situation, as Belyea outlined it, indicates that, in its knowledge practices, academic work upholds the colonality of power. Intervention, as Mignolo argues, requires reinstating the colonial difference in order to devalue the premises of European cartography, and to allow terms like “local knowledge” and “map-like pictographs” to be resigned to European maps.

This resignation of the European map must be accompanied by critical attention to Natives’ answers to the question ‘What is a map?’ As Leslie Marmon Silko (Laguna Pueblo) declares in the epigraph that opens this chapter, “Western European maps are used to steal Indian lands, to *exclude*, to imprison, to cut off, to isolate even segments of the human world from one another.” She follows this practical definition with a more theoretical and general one: “Maps are the only physical evidence of boundary lines.”<sup>12</sup> The conceptual reach of these two answers is global and local. The map is a specific and highly localized tool; in its

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<sup>10</sup> Belyea, “Amerindian maps,” 267.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 274, 269.

<sup>12</sup> Silko, *Conversations*, 120.

European form it is a mechanism used to steal Indian lands and to separate “the human world” into different parts. The map is also a universal record of difference: the reified documentation of boundaries. European mapping exploits the map’s role as the proof of boundaries in order to steal non-European land.

However, Silko’s historical qualifications complicate her initial two answers. As she recounts, her “great grandfather was a surveyor for the U.S. government, and some way [*sic*] he mapped the boundary line in favor of Laguna Pueblo over Acoma Pueblo.” With this anecdote Silko indicates that the European map could be mobilized not only in the European theft of Indian land, but also in the Indian theft of Indian land. As a further proof of the particularly European adaptation of the map’s universal role, Silko recalls that “one of the Bibo family (Lebanese traders) was also a land surveyor who had married an Acoma woman, and this Bibo surveyed boundaries in favor of the Acomas over the Lagunas.”<sup>13</sup> In this additional wrinkle to the story, European mapping is again used to steal Indian land for Indians, but as qualified by Silko, through a non-Indian operator affiliated by intermarriage. What Silko does not reveal in this particular anecdote (although she discusses it at length elsewhere) was that her great-grandfather, Robert G. Marmon, was an Anglo-American who had immigrated to Laguna Pueblo in the 1870s, and who “contracted for many years with the U.S. General Land Office...in surveying land grants and subdividing townships, often employing Indian crews.”<sup>14</sup>

In full, Silko’s answers to the question “What is a map?” exemplify the necessity of recognizing the colonial difference. The paradigmatic scene of mapping briefly constructed by Silko centers upon two U.S. and tribally located non-European actors utilizing European

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Roeder, “The Marmon Brothers.”

cartographic processes that have traveled into U.S. settler colonial practice. These actors, who are of Anglo-American and Lebanese descent<sup>15</sup>—and aided by Native labor—use European cartographic technology to demarcate and codify the boundaries of the two Pueblos—Laguna and Acoma—into which they have respectively incorporated themselves. While their maps each “favor” their separate allegiances—indicating that mapping’s general purpose of marking boundary lines is locally subjective—they also perform the specific European cartographic role of stealing Indian land and “isolating even segments of the world from one another” (in this case, under the aegis of the U.S. government). Silko’s definition of a map unfolds along the lines of the colonial difference, in that it describes mapping as a conflict of local knowledges managed through the imposition of a colonial (European-U.S.) technique that disassembles its own local history and is promoted as a global design.

Silko’s definition of a map is ultimately a narrative of multiple local relationships that reveals mapping to be a process in which cultural differences are activated, spatial differences are asserted, and differentials of power are exploited. It couches a single universal notion of a map—“the only physical evidence of boundary lines”—in a situated tale bristling with different national and cultural signifiers. Each of these markers—Western European, Indian, U.S., Laguna, Acoma, Lebanese—indexes separate local histories that, being drawn together in the act of mapping, are played against each other in a process of favoritism overdetermined by European interests. This selective process differs in degree from what the International Cartographic Association (ICA) refers to in its most recent (circa 2003) definition of a map, as “a symbolised representation of geographical reality,

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<sup>15</sup> It should be noted here that other historical accounts identify the Bibo family of Acoma Pueblo not as Lebanese, but as German Jews from Prussia who had emigrated to the U.S. in the 1860s. See Bronitsky, “Solomon Bibo.” Silko may be conflating the Bibo family with the Fidel family, who were Lebanese emigrants and traders. See Robinson, *El Malpais*, 28.

representing selected features or characteristics, resulting from the creative effort of its author's execution of choices..."<sup>16</sup> Indeed, with this definition—which premiered, in similar form, as the ICA's new definition for the map in 1995—the ICA mobilizes the figure of the author as the creative subject of the mapping process. While the ICA's definition may have been a way of accounting for J.B. Harley's decisive redefinition of the map as "a cultural *text*" in 1989, its uncritical reliance on the author function opens it up to obvious post-structural scrutiny.<sup>17</sup> In other words, by defining the map as the product of an author, the ICA defers the question 'What is a map?' to Michel Foucault's question of "What is an Author?"

Silko's anecdote can be used to elaborate briefly on the relationship between authorship and mapping. Silko defines a map by narrating interactions between colonial technologies, nationalized subjects, and communal allegiances. In her definition, the European mapping technique, used because it conceals theft as reason, is employed by a settler colonial institution through local operators, who are themselves dislocated subjects acting upon a skein of influences. Who are the "creative" authors in this process? If one sees the individualized subjects of Silko's narrative—Silko's great grandfather and Bibo—as the cartographic authors, then one must ask of them a series of Foucauldian questions. Why were these individuals "construct[ed as] certain being[s] of reason" in the context Silko describes; for instance, what role did their non-native status play in their interpellation?<sup>18</sup> How did their disciplinary position as authors grant them ownership of, rights over, or accountability for the cartography they produced, and who had the power to enforce these rights? Although the favorable boundary lines drawn by the two authors could be seen as "signs referring" to their

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<sup>16</sup> ICA, "Mission."

<sup>17</sup> Harley, "Deconstructing the Map," 159 (my emphasis).

<sup>18</sup> Foucault, "What is an Author?" 213.



specific historic personages,<sup>19</sup> what other subjectivities or “selves” are given access to the agency of these cartographers? That is to say, who else can occupy the role of authorial subjects by adhering to their cartographic “system of symbols”? Finally, how do these authorial figures constrain and regulate the possibilities for the use of their maps? For whom do the author’s institutional locations, symbolic constructions, and subjective functions make meaning and agency available, and from whom do they foreclose meaning and agency?

As shown, examining Silko’s localized, contextual definition of mapping in conjunction with the ICA’s thrifty reduction of mapping to the author function allows for a proliferation of new questions. Speculative answers to these questions push the problematics of mapping, culture difference, authorship, and the coloniality of power even further. In the case of Silko’s great-grandfather, Robert G. Marmon, as an author of cartographic texts, some answers are possible. Marmon, who married Marie Anaya, and settled in Laguna Pueblo in the 1870s, had grown up in Ohio, studied as an engineer there, and followed his brother Walter to New Mexico with the promise of working for the U.S. General Land Office. In 1880 Marmon became the “first non-Indian” to be chosen governor of Laguna Pueblo;<sup>20</sup> however, Silko writes that, “Ethnologists blame the Marmon brothers/ for all kinds of factions and trouble at Laguna/ and I’m sure much of it is true—/ their arrival was bound to complicate/ the already complex politics at Laguna.”<sup>21</sup> In 1975 the Marmon brothers established “a Presbyterian mission in the Pueblo and succeeded to convert a significant number of the natives,”<sup>22</sup> and while Robert was governor “the two big kivas [in Laguna]

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 215.

<sup>20</sup> Roeder, “The Marmon Brothers.”

<sup>21</sup> Silko, *Storyteller*, 247.

<sup>22</sup> Roeder, “The Marmon Brothers.”

were torn down.”<sup>23</sup> Meanwhile, both brothers worked for decades as surveyors for the U.S. General Land Office, and for corporate interests, mediating Southwestern U.S. land into the public domain, and into private ownership, by mapping Federal land grants.<sup>24</sup>

Silko clearly acknowledges, in her definition of mapping, that Robert G. Marmon was *authorized* to steal Indian lands, through his state-sanctioned use of European mapping techniques. Considering his biography, one can assert that Marmon attained the cartographic author function due to his status as an educated, white male settler interpellated by the U.S. government. While his local tribal affiliations enforced upon him a particular right, or “favor” over his symbolic productions, the U.S. government ultimately legitimized his right to “own” the boundaries of his community. These boundaries do not only refer to Marmon; they also make subjects of those who, by adopting the systems that inform Marmon’s construction of them, reauthorize them. Ultimately, recognizing Robert G. Marmon as a cartographic *author* means positioning him as one of many “constraining figure[s]” through which Indigenous cartographic self-determination must pass.<sup>25</sup>

This limitation on what Foucault calls the “proliferation of signification”<sup>26</sup> is a function of the coloniality of power. If, as the ICA states, mapping is carried out by author figures like Robert G. Marmon, then mapping is and has been a highly constrained discourse. Given this history, one can see how colonialist mappings have worked, in Mignolo’s terms, to “subalternize knowledge,” by limiting Indigenous access to the author function. These dynamics underpin Belyea’s argument that dysphemisms for Indigenous cartography are ultimately discursive denials of correlative regimes of Indigenous authorship, denials that

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<sup>23</sup> Ellis, “Laguna Pueblo,” 447.

<sup>24</sup> Roeder, “The Marmon Brothers.”

<sup>25</sup> Foucault, “What is an Author?,” 222.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 221.

persist even into the magnum opus of cartographic scholarship, the *History of Cartography*, in which G. Malcolm Lewis writes,

Even when “map” is defined as broadly as in this volume, evidence for the existence of maps in the native Indian, Inuit, and Aleut cultures of North America is scattered, uneven, and plagued with problems of interpretation... Despite these difficulties, it is possible to recognize three broad categories of Amerindian cartography, all associated with the concept of contact with Europeans and Euro-Americans.<sup>27</sup>

In Lewis’ scholarly outline of the field, Indigenous cartography must pass through, or be seen in contact with, the authority of European discourse in order to be recognized as cartography. This reveals more about Lewis’ institutional and cultural position than it does about Indigenous cartography as such, but it is important to note that myopic denials of Indigenous cartographic authority occur not merely in historic colonial or scholarly discourse, but also in legal discourse as well. As attorney Curtis Berkey asserts, the work of cartographic authors like Robert G. Marmon limited cartographic meaning in order to expedite the legality of Federal control over tribal territory:

For decades the federal government used maps prepared by federal cartographers as evidence against tribal claimants in the Indian Claims Commission. As a result, the Commission’s rulings often *constricted* the aboriginal territory of Indian nations.

Because these maps were made according to cartography standards that neglected the Native cultural perspective, they left out large areas that were important parts of the cultural and territorial landscape of Indian nations...After decades—or centuries—of

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<sup>27</sup> Lewis, “Maps, Mapmaking, and Map Use,” 51.

being mapped in this way, the aboriginal territories of many tribes have become legally and politically fixed by these incorrectly drawn boundaries.<sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, as Berkey attests, Indigenous attempts to redress the theft of territory must often exercise a non-Native author function in order to be considered legally legitimate:

The maps being made by indigenous communities today can help redraw [Federally authored] boundaries. But to be effective tools in court, maps still have to conform to strict legal standards of “admissibility,” such as personal knowledge, credibility, and reliability. These standards have been developed according to non-Native means to determine whether facts are “true” in a legal sense. Only recently have courts treated the oral histories and stories of Native communities as admissible evidence... The difficulties of proof can have the unfortunate consequence of forcing Native peoples into making maps that have to conform to government standards of cartography.<sup>29</sup>

As demonstrated by Berkey, the answer to the question ‘What is a map?’ has had longstanding legal ramifications for Indigenous communities. As demonstrated by Belyea and Mignolo, these legal constraints are grounded in the coloniality of power, and are complemented by scholarly classification systems that authorize and legitimize universal cartographic productions. The ICA’s definition of a map asserts the author function as a subjective reproof to universal cartographic systems, but in so doing, it displaces the globality of the map onto the globality of the author figure as a gatekeeper for meaning. While Silko’s definition of a map narrates the coercion of cartography from a subaltern perspective, and reinstates the dialogic local conflicts that inform it, it also establishes the inescapability of cartographic conflict as it is negotiated through authorized actors. All of

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<sup>28</sup> Berkey, “Maps in Court,” 216.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 216-217.

these definitions and qualifications provide important counterpoints to the problem of mapping, and reveal the map as a crucial, hyperbordered ground for the project of Indigenous self-determination.

In Mignolo's terms, Indigenous maps and map processes review the colonial difference in order to discuss the classifications of the colonality of power; to reinstate the local knowledges subalternized by colonialism; and to adapt, adopt, reject, integrate, or ignore the global designs imposed through a longstanding colonial hyperborder. In what follows, I use the definitions of the map proffered by Silko and the ICA as a heuristic for examining Indigenous cartographies as tools for decolonization and self-determination. I explore two mapping projects that index different historical places and/or disciplinary positions, yet overlap in their geographical, tribal, or technological concerns. First, I examine N. Scott Momaday's canonical literary text *The Way to Rainy Mountain* as an imaginative geography that in its formal structure, epistemological framework, and material construction, encodes Indigenous struggles over land and sovereignty into the medium of literature. Next, I look into the "Indigital" mappings being theorized and produced by the Kiowa geographer Mark Palmer. These projects, which revise the "way to Rainy Mountain," examine the potential for encoding uniquely Indigenous spatial narratives into digital mapping platforms. The predicates for and the challenges facing these separate projects are, to a certain degree, implicated in the colonality of power, particularly as it affected what has been called the Spanish, and later, the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, and what I now call the trans-American hyperborder. Viewed in tandem, these projects comprise a critical hyperborder that recognizes cartographic discourse as a site of struggle and also, of self-determination.

## **II. Migration, Imagination, Information, Publication: *The Way To Rainy Mountain***

In the mid-1960s, after the death of his grandmother Aho, Kiowa writer N. Scott Momaday went on what he called a “pilgrimage.” En route from California to Oklahoma to visit his grandmother’s grave, he “began [his] journey proper in western Montana,” and “traveled across the high plains of Wyoming into the Black Hills, then southward to the southern plains, to a cemetery at Rainy Mountain, in Oklahoma.” This 1500 mile trek, angling east and south, followed the “long before” migration route of Momaday’s Kiowa ancestors.<sup>30</sup> With sacred Kiowa stories learned from his father and his grandparents structuring his route, Momaday sought to “see in reality what [his grandmother] had seen more perfectly in the mind’s eye.” In driving through the “reality” of the landscape of the Kiowa migration, Momaday saw places—Yellowstone, Devils Tower, and the Black Hills—that his grandmother had never physically visited. He imagined, however that the “immense landscape” of the migration had lain “like memory in her blood.”<sup>31</sup>

Momaday’s notion of memory in the blood comes under some critical scrutiny now as to whether it is the most productive way to conceptualize tribal relationships with land. As Feminist and Indigenous studies scholar Mishuana Goeman (Seneca) remarked in her recent monograph *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations*, “Respecting the environment is not encoded in the DNA.” Critiquing romanticized, naturalized, and commodified images of tribal stewardship, Goeman cautions against taking Indigenous “‘relationship[s] to the land’ as a given,” and argues, rather, for attention to be paid to the “intellectual and critical work that Native people undertake to pass on [relationships with land] for generations and generations.” Goeman identifies “capitalism and colonization” as powerful mechanisms that have “produced new ways of experiencing time and space” for

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<sup>30</sup> Momaday, *Man Made of Words*, 118.

<sup>31</sup> Momaday, “The Way to Rainy Mountain,” 42.

Indigenous communities.<sup>32</sup> In order to intervene into the “harsh realities of spatial violence” produced by these mechanisms, Goeman foregrounds Indigenous literature as a concurrently powerful mechanism for mapping space and producing “imaginative geographies,” or geopolitical forms that see beyond the colonial nation state.<sup>33</sup>

In this regard, Momaday’s characterization of his grandmother Aho’s relationship to the land of the migratory route could also be seen as “intellectual and critical work” that examines communal processes of memory, imagination, and experience—or what might be called, tribal modes of knowledge. As Indigenous studies scholar Christopher B. Teuton (Cherokee) argues, Aho’s memory in her blood should not be taken for granted, but rather should be identified with the rigorous paradigm of the oral tradition, in which, “stories are as vivid as physical reality,” and by which, continuity with history and place are established in significations that are mediated through “body, mind, ‘blood,’ and ‘memory.’” Proposing that “blood and memories have been passed down to [Aho] in a chain of stories that have transformed her body and mind,” Teuton reimagines memory in the blood as a material learning process whereby stories recode the body and mind with cultural knowledge. Furthermore, Teuton asserts, Momaday’s pilgrimage, as narrated in his introduction to *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, indicates that this particular learning process did not *naturally* continue from generation to generation.<sup>34</sup> The narrator of the essay, Teuton argues, “lacks [Aho’s] understanding of the oral tradition,” and therefore sets out to supplement “physical sight” for “imaginative vision.”<sup>35</sup> The pilgrimage becomes a method of geo-cultural information processing, in which seeing and imagination are concurrently developed as

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<sup>32</sup> Goeman, *Mark My Words*, 28.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-39.

<sup>34</sup> Christopher Teuton, “Theorizing,” 211.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 211-212.

means for building and storing knowledge in the event of the physical loss of a communal knowledge-bearer.

With Goeman's and Teuton's frameworks of critical, imaginative, and processual knowledges in mind, I will analyze the literary outcome of the pilgrimage alluded to above: Momaday's 1969 work *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. I argue that Momaday's text functions as a literary remapping of familial and tribal knowledges that transforms the book into a technology for indigenous cartographies. However, considering *The Way to Rainy Mountain* as a map raises some questions. If, as Teuton argues, Momaday's narrative pilgrimage functioned to "build vision" or to encode a specific "sense of imagination" of Kiowa geographies, then how does *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, as a physical textual object, reframe these concepts, and for whom? Furthermore, how, and with whom, does the text produce what Goeman calls "ideological and material relationships," and how does it reflect what could be called, a culturally specific worldview? Considering the definitions of the map examined above: How does *The Way to Rainy Mountain* account for conflicts of local geographies? Does it work through the author function, or are there other principles of constraint involved in its production of meaning? What are the relationships between its materiality and its use? How does it negotiate with legitimizing global designs and the colonial difference, and how might it serve as a peacemaking tool?

A product of the so-called "movement years," *The Way to Rainy Mountain* has become canonical in the field of Indigenous American literature, and also institutionalized in U.S. culture at large, as evidenced by its excerpting over the years in national standardized tests.<sup>36</sup> A slim, 89-page book, it was first published in 1969, and has sold over 200,000 copies, while having never gone out of print. It contains a prologue, an introduction, an

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<sup>36</sup> Roemer, "Preface," xi.



epilogue, and three separate sections of body text—called respectively “The Setting Out,” “The Going On,” and “The Closing In”—that collectively comprise 24 trifurcated prose pieces that Momaday calls “narrative wheels.” Additionally, two poems bracket the book: “Headwaters” at the beginning and “Rainy Mountain Cemetery” at the end. Finally, in versions printed since 1994, an additional preface is appended. It should also be noted that the text contains eleven illustrations, which were provided by Al Momaday, the author’s father. This brief cataloging of the book’s parts is meant to give a sense of it as a unique textual object. As I will show, its format and structure are intrinsic to its use as a geospatial device. Additionally, in keeping with the processual epistemologies and material relationships foregrounded by Goeman and Teuton, the book’s prismatic organization functions to guide movement across space and time in figural and imaginative, as well as in literal and readerly, paradigms. Finally, the discrete parts of the book also index the constraints of its production, editing, and assemblage, and reflect how market and academic prejudices delimit meaning, particularly in the case of Momaday’s Kiowa indexicality.

To further introduce *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, its emergence not only from the knowledge quest described by Teuton, but also from a series of preexisting texts, should be briefly described. The book, as a complete document, has its roots in two particular literary productions. First, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*’s stories in the “ancestral voice” were first written and collated in a limited edition, leather-bound book called *The Journey of Tai-me*. This book was finely printed in a publication run of 100 copies at the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1967, when Momaday was an associate professor in the school’s Department of English. Second, the title, *The Way to Rainy Mountain* originally headed an essay published in the weekly newsmagazine *The Reporter* in 1967. That essay was

republished as the introduction for *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. It should be noted that this essay was also repurposed as a dialogic sermon in Momaday's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *House Made of Dawn* in 1968.<sup>37</sup> Finally, parts of *The Way to Rainy Mountain* have found their way into other texts of Momaday's in later years; the poem "The Horse that Died of Shame," for instance, elaborates upon an epigraph from *Rainy Mountain* ("Horse").

I present these interweavings of texts that precede and extend from *Rainy Mountain* in order to give a sense of the book as a conduit not only for Kiowa geographies and histories, but also for Momaday's larger textual project, which extends those geographies and histories into disparate discourses. Enote writes, of Indigenous mapping, that it faces a particular challenge of legitimacy outside Indigenous communities.<sup>38</sup> Momaday's literary work represents a slightly different test case. According to critical theorist Robert Warrior (Osage) the phenomenon of Momaday's literary success in the 1960s "remains...the font from which [Indigenous] *legitimacy* in the Academy and American mainstream publishing houses has flowed."<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, historian Jack Forbes (Powhatan-Renape/Delaware-Lenape) argued in 1987 that despite, or perhaps, tangential to, its mainstream success, Momaday's work did not naturally attain legitimacy in Indigenous communities:

Few Indians, aside from university students, have probably ever seen most of the novels produced by [writers such as Momaday], let alone read them. Of necessity, native writers producing novels have to write them in such a way that they will be attracted to an English-language audience which is predominantly non-Indian... Of course, some critics might suggest that in North America, at least, colonialism and capitalism have only a minimal impact upon the character of Native American writing

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<sup>37</sup> Sean Teuton, *Red Land*, 68-70.

<sup>38</sup> Enote, "Introduction," 13.

<sup>39</sup> Warrior, *The People*, 149 (my italics).

and that the influence of white teachers, editors, agents, and reviewers is essentially benign.<sup>40</sup>

It is not my place here to debate Momaday's apparent legitimacy vis à vis Indigenous communities, academe, or the publishing industry. Rather, I wish to highlight that both Warrior and Forbes make reference to the power of the mainstream—in Forbes' terms, White—academic and industry subjects (“teachers, editors, agents, and reviewers”) against and through which any Indigenous author (or any Indigenous cartographer or map process) must pass. Warrior's enthusiasm for Momaday's achievements stems from his critical sense that struggles for intellectual recognition were necessarily tied to struggles for legal and cultural self-determination, and that the “artificially constrained and distorted state...[of] Native American literature” attacked by Forbes,<sup>41</sup> was equally attacked by Momaday, albeit “with a different order of challenge than that of his more practically minded contemporaries.”<sup>42</sup>

Records from the late 1960s of the publication process for *The Way to Rainy Mountain* document stratified epistemological tensions between Momaday's imaginative cartographies and contemporary anthropological and literary considerations. In his 1986 article on the construction of *Rainy Mountain*, literary theorist Kenneth Lincoln euphemizes the supporting readers of Momaday's proofs as, “picky...literary critics” and “downright fussy...social scientists,” before going on an interdisciplinary attack of “social scientists who lattice data to corroborate their own methodologies, or market ‘inside views’ to academic publishing concerns, or indulge antiquated fantasies of ‘wild’ full-bloods on the frontier.”<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Forbes, “Colonialism,” 22.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>42</sup> Warrior, *The People*, 180.

<sup>43</sup> Lincoln, “Tai-me,” 105-108.

For his part, Momaday responded to editorial recommendations to qualify or to standardize certain cultural information, or to change syntax or diction, with repeated orders to his editor, Gus Blaisdell, to “Leave it alone.”<sup>44</sup> He responded to anthropological appraisals—such as, “[this text] is a collection of fragments about the Kiowa—bits...intended to arouse nostalgic feelings for [the American Indian’s] adventurous past and his quaint mythology”—with a bit more anger and frustration (20 May 1968). Corresponding with Blaisdell about such incidents, Momaday confides, “The two pseudo-scientists made me so cotton-picking mad I damn near drafted a letter to them.” In handwriting on the back of the same letter, Momaday refines and further vents his anger:

The Anthropologists: The things that really got me were 1) The accusation that I was dealing in stereotypes + 2) The snide comment that my experience was “marginal.”

The little sons of bitches. (14 October 1968)

One particularly subjective reading of the proofs gives a more exact sense of the constraints Momaday was up against in constructing his imaginary geographies. A reviewing anthropologist unfavorably compared the “artistry” of Momaday’s work to Theodora Kroeber’s 1959 collection of translated California Indian legends, *The Inland Whale* (22 April 1968). Kroeber, an anthropologist and writer at UC Berkeley, had assembled, a decade earlier, a collection of not only transcribed, but “retold” stories gathered from research carried out on California tribes. The comparison of Momaday’s “journey recalled,”<sup>45</sup> as he phrased it, to Kroeber’s “stories retold” allows for an examination of the mediality of

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<sup>44</sup> All references are to Blaisdell, Files, correspondence dates are noted in text. For instance, in editing the line from *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, “Her name was Aho, and she belonged to the last culture to evolve in North America” (6), Gus Blaisdell wrote, “needs some adjective like ‘native’ or ‘indigenous’ (Editorial Report, n.d.). Momaday replied, “Leave it alone. Aho was a member of the Plains Culture; it was the last to evolve on the North American continent” (10 November 1968).

<sup>45</sup> Momaday, *Rainy Mountain*, 4.

Momaday's text along the lines set out by Goeman and Teuton. Criteria of encoding, environment, critical work, and generational transmission separate Momaday's "hybrid set text" from Kroeber's differently hybrid "anthropologist's standard."<sup>46</sup> The chief differences between the texts exist in what could be called—cartographically—selection and orientation. In her preface, Kroeber outlined the methodology of her project: Regarding the transmission of information, her translations were a "carrying over of an art...from another age and culture and language into our own," and therefore required a "change of focus" for "the adult reader who has a general interest in comparative literature." Among the revisions Kroeber made were the editing out of geographic details that were found in the original transcriptions. She justified this process by claiming, "We are less interested in the routes they traversed...than were the Indians."<sup>47</sup> More stridently, Oliver La Farge, in the foreword to Kroeber's book, praised Kroeber for "purg[ing] the insistent repetitions and cluttering detail that primitive people often stuff in their stories for ulterior purposes." Among the "cluttering...stuff" La Farge indicted for overburdening tribal narrative was "the remorseless naming of every least geographical point that anyone visited."<sup>48</sup>

In contrast, the exigence for Momaday's project, was the "routes they traversed"—the *they* in his case being not "capital I" Indians, but rather, a temporally nomadic *we*—his parents, his grandparents, and his migratory Kiowa forebears. Teuton argues that the textual operations engaged in by Momaday served to narrate "a socially constructed and culturally informed way of thinking [through which] the narrator revises his understanding of the landscape."<sup>49</sup> In this case, "routes" are not merely geographic details in a quotidian sense, but

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<sup>46</sup> Lincoln, "Tai-me," 115, 106.

<sup>47</sup> Kroeber, *Inland Whale*, 11-12.

<sup>48</sup> La Farge, "Foreword," 8-9.

<sup>49</sup> Christopher Teuton, "Theorizing," 214.

rather geographic details that index deep constructions of Kiowa knowledge, and that do not merely map space, but also use that space as a medium in which to arrange history categorically. Vine Deloria, Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux) provides an instructive general description of modes of tribal geo-historiography in *God is Red: A Native View of Religion*:

Indian tribes combine history and geography so that they have a “sacred geography,” that is to say, every location within their original homeland has a multitude of stories that recount the migrations, revelations, and particular historical incidents that cumulatively produced the tribe in its current condition. Traditional Cherokees today can still tell stories about the sacred places in Georgia and North Carolina that illuminate the tribal history. The Sioux, Cheyenne, Kiowa, and Arapaho all have traditions that describe Bear Butte in South Dakota and the Devil’s Tower in Wyoming. The most notable characteristic of the tribal traditions is the precision and specificity of the traditions when linked to the landscape...<sup>50</sup>

Anthropologist Keith Basso, who cites Deloria, as well as Momaday’s work on place, imparts a more specific observation of geo-historiography as it is practiced by the Western Apaches:

As conceived by Apaches from Cibecue, the past is a well-worn ‘path’ or ‘trail’ (*’intin*) which was traveled first by the people’s founding ancestors and which subsequent generations of Apaches have traveled ever since. Beyond the memories of living persons, this path is no longer visible—the past has disappeared—and thus it is unavailable for direct consultation and study. For this reason, the past must be constructed—which is to say, imagined—with the aid of historical materials, sometimes called ‘footprints’ or ‘tracks’ (*biké’ goz’áá*), that have survived into the

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<sup>50</sup> Deloria, *God is Red*, 121.

present. These materials come in various forms, including Apache place-names, Apache stories and songs, and different kinds of relics found at locations throughout Apache country...”<sup>51</sup>

To summarize, using Goeman’s terms, Momaday’s text is the result of a process of “critical work undertaken to pass on [relationships with land],” in which “land” is not a universal material concept, but rather a Kiowa historical medium.<sup>52</sup> Kroeber’s project was rather to salvage what were, for her, beautiful but archaic stories, in a way that she believed registered the foreclosure of time upon past cultural contexts. Her metaphors for this process were “the [Athenians’] vivid and multicolored painted sculpture...[which we now associate with] the texture and whiteness of marble” or the “passionate and full-bodied [character]...in ‘baroque’ music...[in which we now] hear an Arcadian wistfulness.”<sup>53</sup> Kroeber’s intervention is to include “California Indian Legends” with these bygone *Western* arts, and to restore them so that they can take on new didactic meanings for Western audiences, not unlike Classical sculpture or music. To see Momaday’s project in these terms is to miss the Rainy Mountain for the trees, for Momaday’s work is not, per se, flattening Kiowa historiography into linear branches of history, but rather interpolating Western historiographies into spatial relations with Kiowa historical materials. The only definite sharing between Momaday’s and Kroeber’s projects is a critical consciousness of the colonial difference, which Kroeber ultimately disassembles through univocal translations, and which Momaday elaborates upon by producing a dialogical media space. Kroeber’s history—anthropological history—is layered and teleological; Momaday’s history, as I will show, is polysemous and circular.

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<sup>51</sup> Basso, *Wisdom*, 31.

<sup>52</sup> Goeman, *Mark My Words*, 28.

<sup>53</sup> Kroeber, *Inland Whale*, 11-12.

In order to consider the historiographic concept of “routes”—which Kroeber misidentifies as only spatial navigations, and which Basso analogizes as arrangements of historical materials comprised of “tracks” within “trails,”—from another angle, I want to consider Robert Warrior’s critical framework of “intellectual trade routes.” Warrior adapts this framework from Edward Said’s “Traveling Theory,” in order to describe “the pathways...trails and then networks of trails” that “ideas follow in their travels.”<sup>54</sup> Examining ideas in this way exercises what Said calls “critical consciousness.” By paying close attention to the “historical transfer of ideas and theories from one setting to another” a critic gains, awareness of the differences between situations, awareness too of the fact that no system or theory exhausts the situation out of which it emerges or to which it is transported. And, above all...awareness of the resistances to the theory, reactions to it elicited by those concrete experiences or interpretations with which it is in conflict.<sup>55</sup> Said follows this description of what might be called the idea and its milieu, by conscripting critics “to provide resistances to theory, to open it up toward historical reality, toward society, toward human needs and interests.”<sup>56</sup> Warrior’s “intellectual trade routes” is a rubric for this kind of endeavor—what Said would call a “spatial sense, a sort of measuring faculty for locating or situating theory”<sup>57</sup>—that imagines a circulatory movement in “the history of ideas that occurred between Europeans and the indigenous peoples of the Americas,” as well as among “the many hundreds of cultures and civilizations that dot the American landscape.”<sup>58</sup> I argue that *The Way to Rainy Mountain*—and particularly what Momaday called the “narrative wheel[s]” that take place in the text—is a chance to see these trade routes, and

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<sup>54</sup> Warrior, *The People*, 181-187.

<sup>55</sup> Said, *The World*, 242.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 241.

<sup>58</sup> Warrior, *The People*, 182.



their transformative effect upon ideas, in action.

The 24 narrative wheels that structure the body text of *The Way to Rainy Mountain* collectively trace the Kiowa migration, beginning with the Kiowa's emergence, "one by one into the world from a hollow log," and ending with Momaday's family enduringly established near Rainy Mountain, in Oklahoma. This overarching narrative is told dialogically, through the accumulating series of narrative wheels, which are written in three "voices"—as Momaday called them—that reference three "vessels for ideas": "myth," "history," and "memoir." Momaday's methodology specified that the "ancestral stories"—which he marks as "mythical," but also as "otherwise fictional"<sup>59</sup>—should be kept on a separate page from the two types of "commentaries," history and memoir, with the ancestral material occurring on the verso and the "transitional" commentaries occurring on the recto. Situated across the gulf of the page break from the commentaries, the ancestral stories claim spatial, and thus, temporal precedence for the reader. Indeed, the ancestral stories preceded the book itself, in print publication—as the prose from which Momaday's first book, *The Journey of Tai-me* was made—and also as indexes of the "timelessness [of] the oral tradition," as Momaday would later write.<sup>60</sup> The spatial separation in printed space between the ancestral stories and the commentaries was importantly enhanced by Momaday's decision to set the commentaries in "different [roman and italics] typeface[s]." In all, as intended by Momaday, the narrative wheel was set to function "in several different ways" [See Figure 1 for an example of the design]:

Where possible, each [commentary] will bear some perceptible relationship to the legend which precedes it; together they will indicate a chronological sequence from

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<sup>59</sup> In conversation, Inés Talamantez has related to me that "sacred stories" may be the most accurate way to refer to the ancestral material; Momaday interchanges "legendary," "mythical," and "ancestral."

<sup>60</sup> Momaday, *Rainy Mountain*, ix.

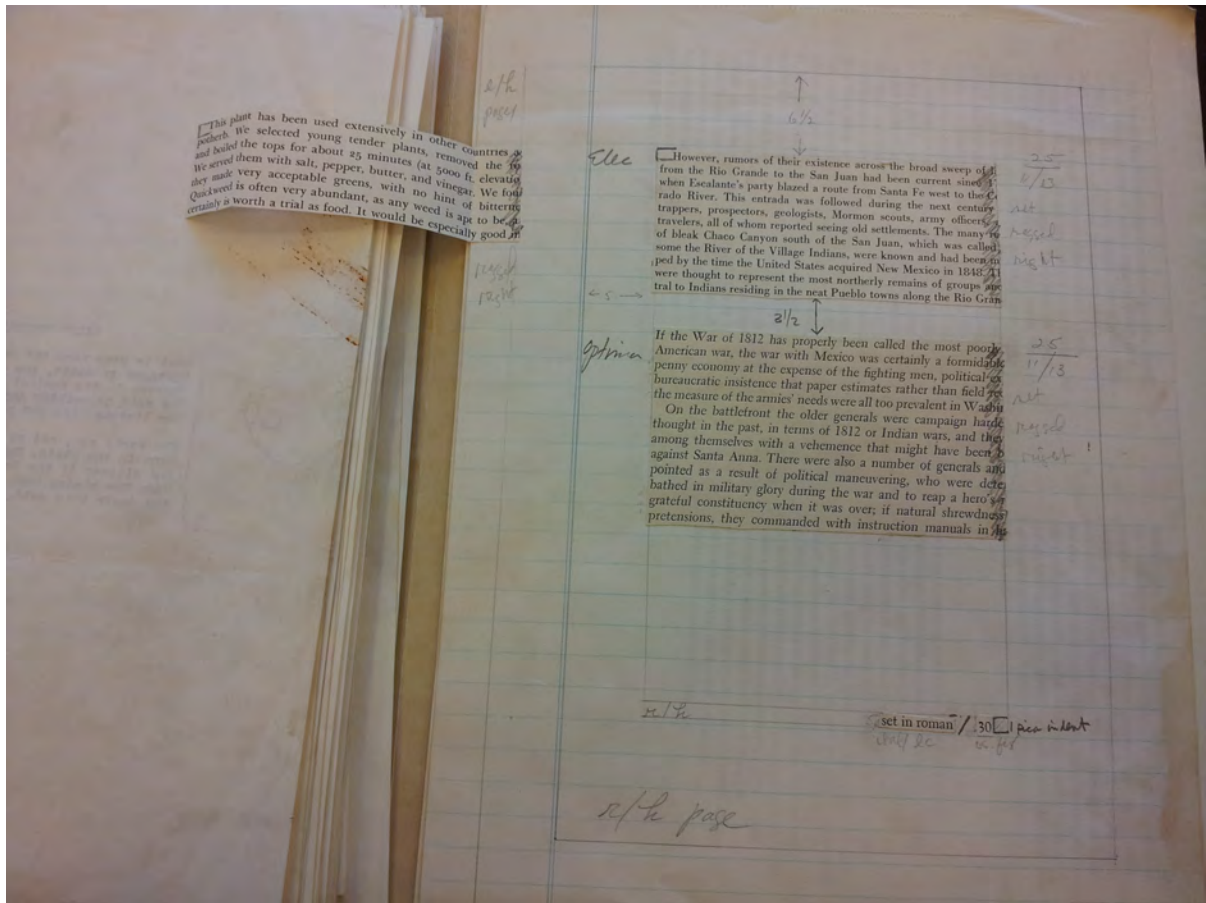


Figure 1. Design mock-up made by UNM Press for the narrative wheels in *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. Ancestral tales would be set on the verso, and the two voices of commentary would be set on the recto.

the beginning of the migration to the present; and they will indicate the landscape of the migration route. (17 April 1968)

It is important, I think, in examining the circulation of ideas in the book's narrative wheels to consider Momaday's authorial intentions, particularly because the relationships Momaday outlined are ultimately precisely designed—but not always precisely *designed*—in printed form. That is to say, although typefaces and page locations functionally distinguish the three “vessels of ideas” from one another, names, locations, habits, and objects found in these vessels are all prone to literal repetition and/or mimesis, or in a more figurative sense, to trading places and jumping around time and space, from myth, to history, to memory, or

from verso to recto.

The sequencing of Momaday's first narrative wheel provides an example of the intellectual dynamism of the genre [Figure 2]. Focusing on the ancestral tale of the Kiowa emergence or "coming out," the wheel as a whole critically diagrams the action of emergence in paginated space as it also locates the action in three counterpoised discourses. Each voice uses the distinct phrase "coming out," albeit with different valences, which carries the single literal idea in a discernible triangle from left to right and top to bottom (or, in a Western cartographic sense, from west, to east, to south—the geographical path of the migration). Considering Said's assertion that "no system or theory exhausts the situation out of which it emerges or to which it is transported," the reader can witness the *idea* of "coming out" being worked through again and again, by traveling visually to three spatial locations that each index different intellectual temporalities or modalities.<sup>61</sup> On the verso side, the ancestral voice narrates the Kiowa peoples' emergence through the hollow log, ultimately revealing that the name the peoples gave themselves upon emerging—*Kwuda*—translates to "coming out":

You know, everything had to begin, and this is how it was: the Kiowas came one by one into the world through a hollow log. They were many more than now, but not all of them got out. There was a woman whose body was swollen up with child, and she got stuck in the log. After that, no one could get through, and that is why the Kiowas are a small tribe in number. They looked all around and saw the world. It made them glad to see so many things. They called themselves *Kwuda*, "coming out."<sup>62</sup>

This theory of naming, and its association with "coming out" is immediately qualified

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<sup>61</sup> Said, *The World*, 242.

<sup>62</sup> Momaday, *Rainy Mountain*, 16.



Figure 2. The first narrative wheel of *The Way to Rainy Mountain* triangulates the term "coming out."

and reformulated by the historical commentary on the top of the recto side, which states, "They called themselves *Kwuda* and later *Tepda*, both of which mean 'coming out.'"

From there, the historical commentary appends another name for the Kiowas, *Gaigwu*, which is not associated with their emergence, but rather with a "custom among Kiowa warriors" in which they wore their hair in different arrangements on either side of their head. This name, the historical voice reveals, transformed into *Kiowa* as a "softened Comanche form of *Gaigwu*."<sup>63</sup>

The historical voice, which transitions the idea of "coming out" into an ethnographic

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 17.

framework, gives way to the voice of memory, in which “coming out” refers to Momaday’s personal memories of “coming out upon the northern Great Plains in the late spring,” presumably during his physical retracing of the Kiowa migration. His impressionistic account of “meadows of blue and yellow wildflowers” develops into a brief commentary on the phenomenological act of seeing itself, which, in his notions, proceeds from an amorphous scene (“nothing but the land itself, whole and impenetrable”), to a collection of unique items in space (“things begin to stand out of the depths—herds and rivers and groves”), to a sense of ontological wholeness (“each of these has perfect being in terms of distance and of silence and of age”). This development of the faculties of seeing concludes with a coherent sense of himself at a unique point in space and time (“now I see the earth as it really is; never again will I see things as I saw them yesterday or the day before”).<sup>64</sup> This cognitive reverie circulates back across the page break to the ancestral tale of emergence, acting in resonance with the line, “They looked out and saw the world.”<sup>65</sup>

In all, the “turning and returning of myth, history, and memoir,” as Momaday defines the narrative wheel, provides a geo-historiographic map of intellectual trade between Kiowa ancestral knowledge, Western historical knowledge, and the direct empirical knowledge of the author, Momaday. None of the forms of knowledge negate each other; at the same time, a hierarchy of knowledge is asserted through the spatial arrangement of the text: The reader, who might be considered the fourth voice, proceeds *first* through the transcribed ancestral knowledge, and experiences the voices of history and memoir *only* in relation to the ancestral voice. That the voice of history is Western, and sometimes non-native, is denoted by the repeated presence of anthropologist James Mooney’s ethnography as historical

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 16.

commentary,<sup>66</sup> as well as by the historic voice of the 19th-century painter George Catlin, who comments upon the aesthetically pleasing appearance of the Kiowas.<sup>67</sup>

The polysemy that these arrangements could create raised questions during the book's editorial process. For instance, correctly situating the idea of "the dog," in narrative wheel number three [Figure 3], troubled editor Gus Blaisdell, who questioned, "shouldn't [the primordality of the dog] go into your personal commentary...?" (Editorial Report, n.d.). Blaisdell recommended that Momaday recast the phrase, "It was so; the dog is primordial. Perhaps it was dreamed into being,"<sup>68</sup> as "[Momaday's] own insight, an emblem garnered out of your experience of dogs as a child at your grandmother's house" (Editorial Report, n.d.). Momaday replied, "Leave it alone; it's the way I want it" (10 November 1968). The exchange demonstrated that the criteria for the vessels of ideas was not self-evident; the historical voice, as imagined by Momaday, could accommodate what was unaccountable in Western conceptions of verifiable historiography, namely, the sense of timelessness attested to the ancestral voice. Blaisdell's concern registered that the idea of history was shifting due to its juxtaposition with the ancestral voice.

Just as dogs could jump from myth to history to memory, so too could Momaday's ancestors cross recto and verso and become differently ideated. As the narrative wheels in *The Way to Rainy Mountain* progress, Momaday's grandparents Aho and Mammedaty, who have appeared as historical and reminiscent figures, begin to appear as characters in the ancestral stories. The appearance of the proper names of his grandparents—figures whom Momaday had acknowledged remained *his* "only in memory"—in all three vessels of ideas, opens those vessels, and loosens the constraints upon the separate discourses that they

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 25, 37, 61, 67.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 21.

represent.

As Momaday's grandfather, Mammedaty circulates around the twenty-first narrative wheel, he becomes mixed up in multiple perceptual events. Mythologically, as it were, he is driving a team and wagon over the plains toward Rainy Mountain when he encounters a phantom child. Historically, he is captured by a photograph, which records him "looking past the camera and a little to one side." Reminiscently, the "four things [that Mammedaty saw] that were truly remarkable," are cataloged and retold. It seems that *sight* is the idea that travels from vessel to vessel in this narrative wheel, and that Mammedaty is attached to this idea, perhaps even bearing it, as the agent who *sees* in each story, whether he's mythically seeing a phantom, historically seeing beyond a camera, or memorably seeing multiple remarkable things.

However, in each vessel, what is seen occurs in a dialectical tension with what cannot be seen. As the ancestral vignette recounts, Mammedaty "looked for a long time [for the little boy], but there was nothing there." in the historical vignette, Mammedaty's "looking past the camera" implies his focus on an object that the reader cannot see or imagine, for the only definite object behind a photograph is the camera itself. In the reminiscent vignette, Mammedaty is described watching as, "a mole came out of the earth...looked all around for a moment, then blew the fine dark earth out of its mouth."<sup>69</sup> In this record, what the mole sees, as it looks all around, cannot be accounted for. These moments beyond sight that constrain the idea of sight in all three discourses, elicit critical consciousness on the textual medium itself, and its limitations as an object of intellectual trade. In Teuton's terms of "developing a Kiowa way of seeing," in Goeman's terms of "work[ing] to pass on...sets of relationships for generations and generations," or in Basso's terms of "construct[ing]...trails...of historical

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<sup>69</sup> Momaday, *Rainy Mountain*, 72-73.

materials,”<sup>70</sup> *The Way to Rainy Mountain* marks itself as a hub of intellectual interchange that is also limited, by its mediality, to account for what it cannot show, what it cannot mediate, what it cannot pass on. As the reader moves through the narrative wheels, she encounters a blank space in the lower verso, a place that represents what cannot be expressed in the book’s form.

In the last legend of the text, a first-person narrative voice enters the ancestral vessel and reports that “East of my grandmother’s house, south of the pecan grove, there is buried a woman in a beautiful dress.” As the narrator recounts, except for basic orientations, the location of this woman has nearly passed beyond knowledge. “Mammedaty used to know where she is buried,” the narrator states, “but now no one knows.” This voice assures the reader however, that if “*you* stand on the front porch of the house and look eastward towards Carnegie, you know she is buried somewhere within the range of your vision. But her grave is unmarked” (my emphasis). The narrator recounts that “she wore a beautiful dress...decorated with elk’s teeth and beadwork...” and that “That dress is still there, under the ground. This then, is the construction of an imaginative geography, an intellectual trade route, pointed out directly for the sake of the reader’s ability to negotiate what can and cannot be seen through the book itself. By asking the reader to gaze through the book at land she cannot physically see, the ancestral voice draws attention to the book as a medium that cannot mediate *as* land, but can rather construct, index, and can connect with the land, and trade with it discursively, as another text, through the medium of imagination. Imagining myself looking upon the construction of land, eastward “towards Carnegie,” down the route indicated by the narrator, I branch into a network of imaginary trails. As a reader—a traveler of text—I can take these trails to other texts, through the “tracks” of geographic signifiers

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<sup>70</sup> Christopher Teuton, “Theorizing,” 210; Goeman, *Mark My Words*, 28; Basso, *Wisdom*, 31.



and place names. For instance, searching into the toponym Carnegie, and circulating among other texts, I learn that Carnegie is the seat of the Kiowa government, and the location of the Kiowa constitution, which is itself an altogether different vessel for ideas.<sup>71</sup>

### III. Digitization and Indigitization: Another Way to Rainy Mountain

Considering *The Way to Rainy Mountain* in the light of the cartographic definitions that framed this chapter allows for another appraisal of its mediality and its utility as a method for encoding tribal knowledge and for Native decolonization and self-determination. Certainly, Momaday's work, to quote the ICA, results "from the creative effort of its author's execution of choices," and upholds the author function as a constraint upon meaning, at the same time that it challenges the author function through its polyvocality, as well as through the interpolation of outside agents, in particularly the author's father, as artist. Likewise, it critically engages with Silko's notion of the map, or the text, as "physical evidence" of "boundary lines," and forces the reader to confront what a text can and can't materially do or be in a system of intellectual trade whereby texts have often functioned to "to *exclude*, to imprison, to cut off, to isolate even segments of the human world from one another."<sup>72</sup> Definitely, it seems to fulfill Enote's vision of a map as "peacemaking tool," in that it places Western disciplinary voices and forms in dialogue with Kiowa disciplines and histories. Just so, it is an object that "aid[s] our memories; give[s] reference to our places of origin, places we have visited, and places we hope to go [and] provide[s] us with a reference of where we are within the universe..." That said, the "we" or "us" of *The Way to Rainy Mountain* becomes an open signification, for, as a "trade text," the book includes the reader in a specific intellectual community disparately associated through experience with the textual

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<sup>71</sup> Momaday, *Rainy Mountain*, 82-83.

<sup>72</sup> Silko, *Conversations*, 120.

object. *The Way to Rainy Mountain* may be a “powerful and unifying force within communities” of readers.<sup>73</sup> However, as Forbes asserts, the text’s commercial circulation does not ensure that it will be a powerful and unifying force with communities of *Kiowa* readers.

Kiowa anthropologist Gus Palmer Jr. has commented upon what may be called the *differend* between Momaday’s literary circulation of Kiowa knowledge and Kiowa storytelling as it is practiced in general, in the community. His appraisal identifies Momaday with the author function, which, it seems to Palmer, is not quite applicable “to the oral Kiowa world”:

When I was recording in the field, no one came along and said so-and-so is a storyteller. When I asked, Who tells stories? or Who is a storyteller? I might as well have asked who the man in the moon was. No Kiowa volunteered any names. All Kiowas tell stories. Scott Momaday has written superb stories and novels. Momaday, who is a poet and winner of a Pulitzer Prize in fiction, writes exclusively in English. He is Kiowa but does not speak the Kiowa language. He has been asked to make public appearances all over the world, and people naturally assume he is a storyteller, which he is, though not in the Kiowa sense, not insofar as the term applies to the oral Kiowa world.<sup>74</sup>

Palmer’s critique demonstrates the effects of traveling on theory. In its circuit along intellectual trade routes with the author, Momaday, the idea of Kiowa storytelling becomes transformed in ways that are not commensurable with its community function, which is “framed by the social context,” and which mandates that “stories are told and not written,”

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<sup>73</sup> Enote, “Introduction,” 12-13.

<sup>74</sup> Gus Palmer, *Telling Stories*, 58.

among other features.<sup>75</sup> Palmer is careful here not to essentialize—Momaday’s circulation of ideas is not on trial as either authentically Kiowa or not Kiowa; rather, Palmer asserts that critical attention must be paid to the medial and cultural effects of intellectual trade routes on tribal knowledge.

Palmer’s son, Mark Palmer (Kiowa) is a geographer who deals with these issues from the perspective of cartographic systems. Examining the ongoing “cartographic encounter” between “Indigenous and Euro-American people,” Palmer is concerned with how these encounters can inspire bottom-up “Community-based mapping among North American Indians in Alaska and Canada,” at the same time that they are determined and “dominated by federal agencies and tribal governments [using] a top-down model.”<sup>76</sup> Palmer historicizes the rise of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) as a new paradigm of cartographic conquest wielded through preexisting systems of Federal governance over Native communities. As he describes it:

By the mid-1980s, however, GIS played an integral role in the management of resources in North America; because GIS is technically more difficult to master than community-based sketch-mapping techniques, most of the research, development, and applications emerged within federal, state, and tribal government agencies. Most American Indian tribal governments located in the lower 48 states adopted GIS through top-down federal-government processes...[primarily through]...the Bureau of Indian Affairs...The BIA’s first digital system was called the Indian Integrated Resource Information Program (IIRIP) and was developed to support resource

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>76</sup> Mark Palmer, “Theorizing,” 82-83. In-text citations for this source follow.

management on tribal land areas; even its name implied integrating, incorporating, and assimilating Indians into the fabric of natural-resource management. (82-83)

Palmer sees GIS as a platform with for fruitful intellectual trade if it can be incorporated into “Transmodern spaces...able to mediate between [top/bottom polarities], [to] break down dichotomies, and [to] create something new” (83). By way of creating these spaces, Palmer is developing the idea of *Indigital Geographic Information Networks* (iGIN), which not unlike *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, functions as an “amalgamation” of three “knowledge systems”—“Indigenous, scientific, and technological”—that, when collected together, become “fragmentary, contradictory, and full of uncertainties” (83). Indeed, Palmer cites Momaday’s curation of the “idea” of Kiowa history remaining amid fragmented material evidence, as a predicate for iGIN (83). With “Spoken Kiowa in rapid decline,” Palmer argues, there is a need for new technological “ideas, inscriptions, and technical incorporations” that can construct “Indigital” historiographies by drawing upon the emerging Kiowa orthography system.

Palmer’s unique application of these ideas involves “ongoing research” carried out by him and his father, Gus Palmer Jr., on “storyscapes, cartographic language, and Kiowa narratives.” Closely examining and documenting Kiowa oral storytelling, the Palmers engage in “kitchen-table conversations,” study the “creation of descriptive Kiowa narratives,” and perform “fieldwork,” during which they “travel through the Kiowa homeland in southwestern Oklahoma, documenting [their] travel routes, physical features, and the human built environment using [their] native language.” From there, they engage in mutual “Analysis of [their] travel narratives,” reviewing “digital audio-recordings and notes taken during the trip,” before parting ways to “further deconstruct the narratives” according to their disciplinary

specialties. While Gus Palmer Jr. works over the linguistic anthropological details of the research, Mark Palmer “experiment[s] with incorporating Kiowa into GIS” (85).

Palmer’s work capitalizes upon the fact that “Digital GIS are convergent technologies, able to connect with other multiple data sources, maps, remote-sensing images, computer interfaces, and the Internet.” This informational flexibility facilitates Palmer’s ability to amalgamate Indigenous, scientific, and technological knowledges, particularly through the translation of orthographic Kiowa “into binary code and binary code into Kiowa.” Furthermore, due to the convergent framework of “network GIS” technology, the incorporation of encoded Kiowa does not merely enter Kiowa in the system, it actively “shapes” the system with Indigenous information (86).

As Palmer shows, this process of shaping digital maps with Indigenous information can be analogized to shaping network data maps with economic or geographic information, i.e. “updating” maps to account for “impedances, objects or events that impede or slow down the flow of traffic.” The obvious example of this would be Google Maps’ “Directions” API, which as Palmer summarizes it, “maps out the most efficient routes” for travel based upon its processing of downloadable, networked geospatial data. While the “best route” scenario that is ultimately mapped “may be very useful for telling us [how to get efficiently from one point to another],” Palmer observes, it is “useless when it comes to telling the traveler anything culturally interesting about the place, [or] how complex the cultural landscape is” (86-87).

In order to critically engage this process using iGIN, Palmer made three digital route maps of what may be called “the way to Rainy Mountain” in the Kiowa allotment area, south of Carnegie, Oklahoma. The first map is a computer-generated best-route map that functions as a “control”; it contains a discrete itinerary consisting of directions and mileages. The

second map “enriche[s]” the route with Gus Palmer Jr.’s “wayfinding narratives [in] the Kiowa language” by coding them into the “network GIS attribute table,” so that “each network stop in the attribute table holds a portion of the narrative.” The third map juxtaposes these two routes in the same programmatic space so that the relative efficiency and “enrichment” of each can be compared (87).

Palmer explains that the effect of the Kiowa wayfinding narratives upon the map is a “messy and complex Indigital map” of a “hybrid Kiowa navigational route” (88). Although the Indigital route is, at 22.6 miles, only seven tenths of a mile longer than the journey on the best route map, it contains seven more notable destinations through which the journey is routed. Palmer describes these destinations as “teaching stops” where he and his father “reflected on the memories and experiences of places;” he recounts that each stop “consume[d] 10 to 20 minutes” of travel time. Further theorizing upon the function of these stops relative to the convergent framework of the GIS map, Palmer reasons that the “teaching stops” could, in the jargon of network flow rates, be recategorized as Indigital “emotional or teaching *impedances*” (my emphasis). Palmer explains that the network data model cannot account for emotions. Emotions are figural narrative events that can only be “expressed as a component of time or impedance within the network data model.” As far as networked machine navigation is concerned, emotions are literal roadblocks. Palmer emphasizes that emotions are intrinsic to his and his father’s journeys across the space of the Kiowa allotments toward Rainy Mountain, and the digital concept of emotional impedances can be used to organize the route into separate sights for reflecting upon, remembering, and learning within place. Palmer’s Indigital maps repurpose the concept of impedance of traffic flow by rethinking impedances as opportunities to engage with historical materials in the landscape,

and to construct imaginative spatial histories. These histories bind participants to memories—or data—mediated through the land, in the same manner that a network API is bound to a satellite. Palmer emphasizes this inverse relationship, stating, “Emotional impedance information cannot be downloaded from satellite GPS units; it can only be gathered in the field, as a narrative or ethnographic study of place” (87).

Expressing teaching stops as impedances does not foreclose the ability to narrativize them on the digital map. Palmer shows that the Indigital route’s itinerary, which draws from the map’s attribute table, can express each wayfinding narrative as a kind of navigational direction in Kiowa and English. This allows the entire itinerary to function as a dialogic, narrative record, or a guide, of a way to Rainy Mountain. Furthermore, examining the “teaching stops” relative to the map’s “overlay of the Kiowa allotment land area” allows for geospatial analysis of what Silko described as the ability of maps to isolate and separate peoples and land (86). When analyzing his digitized route maps, Palmer learned that

Network GIS and allotment overlays revealed that my dad’s stories correlated with the surrounding allotments. When we drove through areas without Kiowa allotments, the stops and the stories ceased; discussions resumed when we entered the western allotment area around Rainy Mountain. (87)

If Momaday’s project revealed the potential for the book, as a media object, to account for geospatial Kiowa knowledge systems, and to place that knowledge in dominant, flexible, and localized relationships with non-native, Western voices, then Palmer’s project reveals a similar potential for GIS, despite the technology’s brief, but definite history of top-down control over Native land and resources. Palmer’s Indigital map and its “emotional impedances” shows that iGIN, as processes that combine telecommunication and localized

tribal knowledge networks, can, in Enote's words, "aid [Kiowas'] memories; give reference to [Kiowa] places of origin, places [Kiowa people] have visited, and places [Kiowa people] hope to go [and] provide [Kiowa people] with a reference of where [they] are within the universe....," through an assemblage of satellite location and emotional narration. Describing his project, Palmer asserts that, "Indigenous geographic knowledge systems in North America are not static, pure, homogeneous entities but heterogeneous, open, dynamic, and subject to change" (87). The Indigital itinerary he produces, with its navigational shorthand, its mile measurements, and its translations of Kiowa and English orthography indexing a density of historical and personal detail, functions—not unlike Momaday's narrative wheels—as a new genre for processing intellectual trade routes, albeit one that extends beyond literary networks and the author function, and appropriates the digital informational circuits of the global hyperborder.

## **V. Conclusion**

"What is a map?" is the question that opened this chapter, which closes without having a definitive answer. I hope that the question remains open in academic discourse, in legal discourse, and in the emergent technical discourses that underpin GIS and digital communication systems. As shown above, maps can be many kinds of things. In the service of the colonality of power, they produce rational thievery of Indian land; in the service of Indigenous communities they provide guidance and a ground for imagination and memory. The meaning of the map travels from one of these poles to the other without exhausting either. The map therefore remains a site of struggle that records the colonial difference and effects the subalternization of knowledge as correlates of putting land in formation. Only critical recognition of the map's medial subjectivity and exclusionary predicates will allow it



to become a tool for self-determination and peacemaking as it continues to transform and transfer into new knowledge systems.

## Chapter Three

### Amending Walls: “Tactical Infrastructure” and Other Fictions of the U.S.-Mexico Hyperborder

He only says, “Good fences make good neighbors.”  
Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder  
If I could put a notion in his head:  
“*Why* do they make good neighbors? Isn't it  
Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.  
Before I built a wall I'd ask to know  
What I was walling in or walling out,  
And to whom I was like to give offence.  
Something there is that doesn't love a wall,  
That wants it down...”

—Robert Frost, excerpt from “Mending Wall,” 1914

#### I. Introduction

Like the hyperfence that it examines, this chapter seems a miscellany. As an assemblage of thoughts, impressions, and arguments, it is a byproduct of a long course of archival research and participatory observation. I spent over a year researching the U.S.-Mexico border fence as a literary and historical material object. Upon moving to San Diego in Fall 2014, I was also able to participate in the social processes surrounding the fence through involvement with Friends of Friendship Park, a non-governmental, transborder friendship initiative centered on the Monument Mesa area between San Diego and Tijuana. Gaining tangible social experience with the fence, and with the community that surrounded it, altered my impressions of my research object. In many ways, conceptualizing about the hyperborder began here, in the problem of the irreducibility between the symbolic fence and the material fence, in questioning the fence as a historical construct and a lived reality.

I disclaim the heterogeneity of this chapter as a function of the sundry nature of its research object, but in that sense, the chapter models its argument in its form. What I am concerned with here is precisely the question of how symbolic texts relate to infrastructural

forms, and what the effects are of referencing one medium with another. If this were an examination of purely textual relations, then the processes I examine below would be considered a type of intertextuality. However, in order to account for the incommensurability of the fence with literary media—and for the dynamic relations that occur despite their uncommon medial systems—I am mobilizing media theorist Marshall McLuhan’s idea that “the ‘content’ of any medium is always another medium,” in order to examine how media traffic in the form and content of other media.<sup>1</sup>

I argue below that despite their incommensurable medial systems, the cultural techniques of writing and fencing are intrinsically related, and that they are correlative operations that, in the words of media theorist Cornelia Vismann, produce political subjects that claim mastery over them as media and over the “[political operation] associated with [them].”<sup>2</sup> Beyond that, I am interested with how mastery over one operation—say, the writing of literature—can furnish mastery over the other operation, due to their shared technological a priori and their related acts of inscribing difference.

I follow this argument through four literary texts and some media historical investigation of the fence itself. I begin with an extended reading of Robert Frost’s poem “Mending Wall,” which has become, in the United States, the paradigmatic text about the social stakes of fencing. Interpretation often focuses on the identities of the two characters in the poem, and their allegorical or didactic function for society at large. I try to place their colloquy into a larger media context, whereby the fence that they debate serves as an indexical connection to histories of fencing, to their social predicates, and to the

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<sup>1</sup> McLuhan, *Understanding*, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Vismann, “Cultural Techniques,” 84.

technological shifts in the act of fencing that have ironically elevated their quaint act of fencing to a global scale.

From there, I directly engage the U.S.-Mexico border infrastructure as it is symbolized in the literary work of Gloria Anzaldúa and Carlos Fuentes. Anzaldúa socializes the late 20th-century border fence, and makes it possible to imagine it as a heterogeneous—even familiar—collection of objects. Fuentes diagrams the emergent technological border relations at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries, and the ways in which the fence has become not only a symbolic, but a material lens—or series of lenses—for viewing the globalized other. I finish my literary analysis with a brief appraisal of the encyclopedic work of William T. Vollmann, whose literary subjectivity exemplifies and complicates the technologies of mastery that inhere in the presence of both the fence and the book in the U.S.-Mexico hyperborder.

In between these literary readings I engage in media histories of the fence that strive to connect the literary assertions of Frost, Anzaldúa, Fuentes, and Vollmann, to the fence as an archaeological object, and to fencing as a cultural technique. Between history, poetry, legal writ, and spools upon spools of lines about barbed wire, I must confess that this chapter is almost as piecemeal as the object it analyzes. So it stands, for now.

## **II. Ruminations**

“Here there are no cows,” the narrator of Robert Frost’s “Mending Wall” declares to his neighbor as the two of them rebuild a stone wall that divides their properties. The narrator is trying to convince his neighbor of the anachronism of their ritual. He initiates a line of questioning and answers it himself: “Why do [good fences] make good neighbors? Isn't it/ Where there are cows? /But here there are no cows.” In citing a historic human/ animal

distinction, and denoting its inapplicability, the narrator diagrams an actor network in which fences, humans, and cows constitute each other. In this equation, fences restrict the movement of cows; in so doing, they connect human neighbors in the common interest of domestication, which authorizes the animal otherness of cows. Frost's narrator meditates that without cows the valence of the fence shifts ominously. The other third becomes a "What," a "Whom," or a "Something there is that doesn't love a wall." With his traditional retort—"his father's saying"—the neighbor indicates that he is caught up in a different network. The fence does not connect him to the narrator and to animal others. It connects both men to the law that precedes them, and that has always already taken stock of the distinction between human and animal. If he cared to say more, the neighbor might utter that, without their wall, they would be the cows.

"Here there are no cows," the narrator of Robert Frost's "Mending Wall" proclaims of his apple orchard and his neighbor's pine forest in early 20th-century New England. Historicizing the narrator's statement places Frost's characters into a saga of changes in the land. The law that is being upheld by the neighbor is a law that locally, at least, extends to the 17th-century infrastructural development of New England as an English colony. The law concerns the ownership of animals and the ownership of land; it acknowledges the fence as the tool by which English colonists separated their animals from their crops, and from themselves. Additionally, it endows the fence with a further symbolism: The fence is alleged as the mark of people who possess land by subjecting it to systematic techniques of agriculture.<sup>3</sup> Circa 1628 Massachusetts governor John Winthrop named the fence as the divider between "natural" and "civil" rights. On the natural side of the fence, he placed Natives, who "enclose no land," and have no "settled habitation, nor any tame cattle to

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<sup>3</sup> Cronon, *Changes*, 130.

improve the land.” On the civil side of the fence, he placed “we,” the Christian descendents of those who had “appropriated [land] by their own industry,” and who stood to “lawfully take” what was not marked by the Natives “for their own use.”<sup>4</sup> In Winthrop’s rubric, the New England fence is both a practical and symbolic material. Operating ontologically, it transmutes stones and timber into its linearity, constructs spatial units for habitation on the land, and contains the mobility of cattle and swine. Operating semantically, the fence marks a distinction from which cultural differences are reified. The fence is a medium for nature and civility: civility informs its building, nature its unbuilding.

“Here there are no cows,” the narrator of Robert Frost’s “Mending Wall” asserts, as if to reinstate nature in New England. History seems to bear him out, but rather than mysterious ground-swells, it is bullish capitalism that has diminished the local cow population. The railroad has, in Winthrop’s terms, appropriated land by industry, and placed cattle into orbits that extend far beyond the narrator’s crumbling wall. If, as historian P.W. Bidwell states, “the establishment of through railroad connection with the West between 1840 and 1850 marked not the beginning, but the culmination of a generation of growing pressure on New England producers from cheaper outside sources of supply,” then by the early 20th century, the narrator and his neighbor are enacting a ritual with not merely regional, but continental implications.<sup>5</sup> Frost’s 1914 colloquy accedes to a future when the “great majority of [New England] farmers” no longer keep “...four or five cows, a yoke of oxen, a horse, some pigs” for self-reliance and small-scale commerce.<sup>6</sup> The cows rather, are kept out on the Great Plains, commodities in a new world system in which nodes of Western pastureland, Midwestern packing plants, and regional retailers, connected by cattle drives and refrigerated

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<sup>4</sup> Winthrop, “Reasons.”

<sup>5</sup> Bidwell, “Agricultural Revolution,” 689.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 698.

rail cars, send a “flow of meats from the Midwest” to Eastern cities and towns.<sup>7</sup> As ecological historian Reviel Netz asserts, this commercial and industrial network evolved “simultaneously with [the innovation] of barbed wire,” which made for a better fence—for “being so simple and lucrative”—than any stone wall.<sup>8</sup> The frames for Frost’s allegory are not only regional traditions and memories of colonial law, but also new paradigms of industry and distribution that have reoriented regionalism and redrawn the territory of civil society.

“Here there are no cows,” the narrator of “Mending Wall” historically declares, as thousands of miles of barbed wire fencing domesticate cattle and shunt them east toward New England dinner tables. The network paradigm that was born out of U.S. westward expansion linked “the eastern diet” to the “special colonization process going on in the American West, in which vast stretches of land were brought under control during a brief span of time...with maximum flexibility and profit.”<sup>9</sup> Transportation networks established literal feedback loops in which foodstuffs traveled east, to be converted to capital and reinvested in the West. In this system, barbed wire fences functioned as both content and form. As the *content* of distribution networks, manufactured barbed wire was shipped from Eastern and Midwestern industrial centers and deployed on the Western range. As the *form* of distribution networks, barbed wire established efficiently lethal vectors for the mass movement of cattle. In this role, barbed wire symbolically carried forth Winthrop’s dialectic of nature and civilization. Taking a page from McLuhan, and considering that “the ‘content’ of any medium is always another medium,” one could say that the stone wall is the *content* of

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<sup>7</sup> Hooker, *Food*, 221.

<sup>8</sup> Netz, *Barbed Wire*, 47-49.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

the barbed wire fence, remediated for a new context.<sup>10</sup> Frost's poem seems to defer this historical context, in favor of an allegory about fence-building that encapsulates the ethics of the technical practice. But "Mending Wall" is not only about fence-building; it is also a poem about civil discourse. As such, the poem is implicated in a shifting debate about nature and civilization that was informed by the hyperfence of the American West.

Literary historian David Sanders indicts the elocution showed by Frost's narrator as, "first merely rhetorical, and then reductive, as if all other values of a wall had gone the way of numerous, small-scale dairy operations."<sup>11</sup> Pace Sanders, I stress that the narrator's invocation of "cows" as a historical predicate for technology is carried through into his prophecy of a wall-building system in which legal aphorisms are replaced by biopolitical feedback. Through the narrator's quantification of organisms, and solicitation of the milieu, Frost's allegory remediates Winthrop's colonial writ into a more universally humanized discourse, albeit one not moored in law or religion, but in information. The answers to the narrator's questions—"what" and "whom"—are demographics, and the exigencies of building—"walling in," "walling out," and "offence"—are contingencies, not destinies. Furthermore, as a modernist, globalized remediation of Winthrop's writings that is analogous to barbed wire's amending of the stone wall, the context for Frost's poem is a world system of letters implicated in a world system of fences. Just as barbed wire traveled and formed distribution networks, so too did "Mending Wall," which was mostly written, and first published, in the United Kingdom as the first poem in *North of Boston*, and then subsequently republished in the United States. The global peregrinations of Frost and his poem help to establish the extension of a fence as a cultural technique, historical symbol, and

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<sup>10</sup> McLuhan, *Understanding*, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Sanders, *A Divided Poet*, 127.



mass-produced commodity. As Sanders asserts, it was “conversation and walking...among the stone walls [in Scotland],” and associated memories of “spring wall-repair with his neighbor [in New Hampshire],” that inspired Frost’s writing of “Mending Wall.”<sup>12</sup>

Recognizing a trans-Atlantic link in the symbol of the wall, Frost fed back, into the colonial circuits traveled and mapped by Winthrop, a poetics that recognizes a networked marketplace as the milieu for both writing and wall-building.

In this chapter I analyze the links between infrastructural forms and literary forms in the specific historical context of the U.S.-Mexico border fence. Frost’s poem frames my analysis for the handful of reasons exemplified above. As an allegorical text, “Mending Wall” diagrams the links between discourse and fence-building in the European colonial tradition that informed the technical use of fencing in the United States. Additionally, in its historicity, “Mending Wall” bears traces of the networks of production and distribution that shaped the industrialized media both of fencing and of literature. Frost employs a dialogic form of poetry to remediate the content of Colonial law; this form draws a dialectic in which fencing is both a *necessary* instrument of law, and a technique that is *conditional* upon the demands of the milieu. That the dialectic devised in Frost’s poem has become the compulsory frame for discourse on fencing in the United States is perhaps best witnessed in the recent legislation about fencing on the U.S.-Mexico border. In a 2006 remediation that returned the content of Frost’s poem to the medium of law, Representative Patrick T. McHenry (R-NC) introduced the Good Fences Make Good Neighbors Act in the 109th Congress. Although this particularly Lacanian sublimation of the “father’s saying” from “Mending Wall” failed ratification, the passage of the Secure Fence Act into law that same year was hailed by certain politicians as an affirmation of the colonial legacy inherent in

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 89.

Frost's poem. In summarizing the utility of fence legislation, Senator Jeff Sessions, Republican of Alabama, reiterated, "Good fences make good neighbors." Then Sessions rearranged the logic of the proverb, stating, "Fences don't make bad neighbors."<sup>13</sup>

The remediation of "Mending Wall" into a law addressing the U.S.-Mexico border indicates the currency of Frost's allegory, but it also exemplifies the extension of the border itself into a distributed network of media and materials. In what follows, I concern myself with infrastructural and literary media in which fencing takes form, and more specifically, with the interconnectedness of those media in the context of the U.S.-Mexico hyperborder. Emphasizing that material infrastructure and literary texts inform each other in loops of remediation, I trace how border fencing has fed into the form of literary texts, and how literary texts have been and could be remediated into fencing.

Crucial to my argument is the agency of the fence itself. This status is granted through the theoretical framework of cultural techniques, which recognizes a fence as a medium that "determines the political act" of marking space and that "produces a subject" that "claims mastery" over the fence and the "[political operation] associated with it."<sup>14</sup> Implicated in the fence's ability to determine political acts is the materiality and form of the fence itself. Likewise, implicated in mastery over the fence and its operation is knowledge of building techniques and awareness of their political effects. This is to say that fencing, in the words of Bernhard Siegert, "comprises a more or less complex actor network that includes technical objects and chains of operations," and that fencing thus informs, and is informed by, knowledges that take other mediated forms.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Hulse and Rutenberg, "Senate Votes."

<sup>14</sup> Vismann, "Cultural Techniques," 84.

<sup>15</sup> Siegert, "Doors," 7-8.

As will be shown, fencing as remediation can be diagrammed in a number of ways: Barbed wire, which takes the name *alambre de espinos* [wire of thorns] in Spanish, could be said to take the media of thorns or other vegetative barriers as its form. As asserted above, barbed wire also remediates, as symbolic content, the colonial stone wall, amid a “dearth of wood and stone.” Furthermore, barbed wire remediates the laws and cadastres that, in cases like the Homestead Act, conveyed to “homesteaders 160 acres of land for a nominal fee if they would live on the property and cultivate it for five years.”<sup>16</sup> The laws which—as text—give land to the homesteaders are materialized as barbed wire. In these three remediations—thorns, stone walls, and legal discourse into barbed wire—it is hard to miss the trace of Winthrop and his dialectic of civility and nature. Claiming mastery over the barbed wire fence and its political operations was both promoted and lamented as an act of civilization that modernized the “open range.”

Vegetation, other fence types, and laws and cartographic lines are systematically remediated as form and content in the barbed wire fence as it stands as a material object. This does not, however, complete the process of fencing. The fence continues to be remediated into political operations associated with fencing. These operations implicate the fence’s materiality and/or its symbolism; they localize the fence, and they extend it recursively. In the case of the stone wall, “Mending Wall” represents an extension of the wall as content, mediated through poetry, that addresses civic discourse. Correspondingly, María Herrera-Sobek has written of “the use of barbed-wire iconography ... as a semiotic sign [in Chicana/o art] specifically designed to encode concepts of dehumanization, oppression, racism, pain, brutality, exclusivity, and suffering as they relate to Mexican transnational migratory movements.” These remediations indicate the recursivity of fencing as a cultural technique.

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<sup>16</sup> Duncan, “Devil’s Hatband,” 197.

As media, fences determine political acts whether they are built on site, erected symbolically through literary or legal language, or appropriated as iconography for what Herrera-Sobek calls “aesthetic activism.”<sup>17</sup> Fencing is a cultural technique that comprises a range of material and symbolic operations, that mediates contingencies in the realms of land and history, and that establishes and disestablishes culture in its performance.

It is important to emphasize that fencing, as a cultural technique, implies not merely the building of a fence, but rather the range of operations associated with fencing, which produces subjects who build, mend, climb, and cut fences, and also subjects who legislate, map, draw, and write fences. How and where these operations are performed implies culture: Frost traced a cultural technique of fencing that crossed the Atlantic with Anglo colonization, and that was remediated by the industrial revolution. Frost’s trace itself was extended into the Secure Fence Act, establishing a continuous history for fencing as a cultural technique. In being remediated into the Secure Fence Act, however, Frost’s lyrics entered a “new play of signs,” an “epistemic order” not originally implicit in their meaning—specifically, the discourse of the U.S.-Mexico border.<sup>18</sup> Frost’s poem entered this discourse precisely to be instrumentalized in the service of fencing, and it was transformed, or even deformed in the process.

How and why “Mending Wall” was transformed in the act of its remediation into border discourse provides the central question for this chapter. This question has, as its basis, the following logic: 1) The U.S.-Mexico border initiates in reality the dichotomy that it marks. Or, to paraphrase Martin Heidegger, the two nations emerge as different nations only

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<sup>17</sup> Herrera-Sobek, “Barbed Wire,” 150.

<sup>18</sup> Siegert, “The Map,” 13.

as the border draws them as such.<sup>19</sup> 2) The border, therefore, functions as media that take various forms. This hyperborder includes a variety of fences. 3) Border fences, in the process of fencing, determine the political act of bordering in ways that depend on the different formal characteristics of fences. 4) Border fencing produces subjects that perform the operations of fencing, and that are informed and transformed by these operations. 5) These subjects can be human actors, non-human animals, or technical devices that engage in the technique of fencing.

Citing borderlands historiography, technological and art histories, and media theory, I will construct an archeology of different fence forms on the U.S.-Mexico border, and I will analyze the process of fencing that is associated with those forms. With “Mending Wall”—and its transformation—in mind, I argue that the writing of literature is intrinsically an operation associated with fencing, and I present three texts that remediate the fences and walls built on the U.S.-Mexico border. I argue that these texts—Gloria Anzaldúa’s “The Homeland, Aztlán/ *El otro México*,” Carlos Fuentes’ *La frontera de cristal*, and William T. Vollmann’s *Imperial*—respond to evolutionary stages of the infrastructure on the U.S.-Mexico border through formal experimentation, and that these texts’ experimental forms are indicative of the effects of fencing on the political subjects that it produces.

“Mending Wall” employed the symbol of the stone wall to supply an allegory that implicates colonial law, industrial production, modern distribution networks, and civic discourse. In turn, “Mending Wall” was transformed into an index of itself, and deformed into syllogism by lawmakers, when it was remediated into the discourse of the U.S.-Mexico border. I will argue below that the works of Anzaldúa, Fuentes, and Vollmann remediate fencing in ways that, like “Mending Wall,” critically diagram the cultural technique of

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<sup>19</sup> Heidegger, “Building,” 354.

fencing, by exploring its conditions, operations, and dialectical violence. Furthermore, I will demonstrate that unlike “Mending Wall,” which was deformed into information by its conscription into border law, “The Homeland, Aztlán/ *El otro México*,” *La frontera de cristal*, and *Imperial* already bear the formal anxiety of border discourse, and reflect the historical predicates of fencing through experimental formal structures that augment and challenges their narratives.

In the following analysis of the intertwined literary and infrastructural media in the context of the border, I begin with another close-reading of “Mending Wall,” in which I examine how it diagrams the technique of fencing. From there, I provide a concise media history of fencing on the U.S.-Mexico border. Then I proceed into analyses of the works of Anzaldúa, Fuentes, and Vollmann.

### **III. Technicity, Mediality, Symbolism: Fencing as a Cultural Technique**

In July 2014 a flash flood in Ambos Nogales collapsed a 60-foot section of border fencing on the west side of the binational city, near the Mariposa Port of Entry. The fencing, which had been installed only three years prior, was a portion of Nogales’ “new, higher, see-through fence,” that, according to the *Arizona Republic*, was governmentally touted as “safer, harder to breach and less of an eyesore.”<sup>20</sup> The 20-foot-high structure of concrete-filled and rebar-reinforced steel beams was toppled despite being anchored into cement seven feet underground. In breaching, the fence gave way to a wave of water and debris (“huge tree trunks, pallets, car doors, plastic bottles”) that submerged a neighborhood in southwestern Nogales, Arizona.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, on the same day as the flooding, the U.S. Border Patrol discovered an approximately garage-door-sized gap had been sliced out of a section of the

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<sup>20</sup> Gonzalez, “Nogales.”

<sup>21</sup> Clark and Coppola, “Rainstorm.”

border fence on the east side of town. It was estimated that “precision tools,” which were not found at the scene, had enabled the fence-cutter(s) to sever eight concrete-filled steel posts in a matter of hours.<sup>22</sup>

The confluence of these alternately sublime and picaresque events seems only to confirm Robert Frost’s dictum. Something—indeed, many things there are that don’t love a wall, and that want it down.<sup>23</sup> One could extend this reference and translate the categorical “gaps,” “spills,” “ground-swell,” and “work of hunters” of Frost’s New England pastoral into the “breaches,” “weather,” and “burrowing” subheads in the U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s 2009 presentation on *Comprehensive Tactical Infrastructure Maintenance and Repair*.<sup>24</sup> Or one could cite the voice of the neighbor, and justify fencing with refrains of “good fences make good neighbors.” While Frost’s language lends itself to the criticism and justification of fence- or wall-building on the U.S.-Mexico border, it also asserts an unspeaking dialogic presence that must be considered: that of the fence/wall itself. In “Mending Wall,” the fence/wall is afforded both an object status and agency. As an object, it can be loved or not loved. However, it also has the power to “make” neighbors, and thus to determine political relationships. Senator Sessions’ deformation of Frost’s lyrics—that “Fences don’t make bad neighbors”—further modulates the agency ascribed to the fence by the father’s saying in “Mending Wall.” A good fence will make the neighbors’ relationship good, but unqualified fences will not negatively affect the relationship. Somewhere between these terms lies the range of possibilities for interaction between fences and neighbors.

“Mending Wall” sketches an actor network wherein two neighbors touch and talk to stones, while communicating through the space *caused* by those stones. The wall itself

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<sup>22</sup> Prendergast, “Vehicle-sized gap.”

<sup>23</sup> Frost, “Mending Wall,” 33-34.

<sup>24</sup> United States, *Comprehensive*, 18-20.

conditions the possibilities for discourse by signaling with its gaps—its geology, its earth-words—that it is time for the neighbors “to walk the line/ And set the wall between [them] once again.” The neighbors are drawn into conversation by the wall. They become engaged in a technique that, to use Siegert’s phrase, “decenter[s them] onto the technical object.”<sup>25</sup> By “keep[ing] the wall between [them] as they go,” the neighbors become part of a technical process of wall mending that is simultaneously haptic, reflexive, and iterative. In gathering and replacing different *types* of boulders, the neighbors are not handling natural items, but rather, items with complex medialities, as indicated by their metaphoric signifiers.

Emphasizing that “some are loaves and some so nearly balls” assigns the stones to a technical discourse of crafted objects. The stones’ transformation into weaponry late in the poem—“I see him there/ Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top/ In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed”—extends the chains of operations constituted by the actor network. Alternately, the stones are loaves, balls, and armaments; the neighbors deform their own hands—“wear [their] fingers rough”<sup>26</sup>—compelling the stones to act as a wall.

Central to this technique of mediating stones into walls is the “spell” that the neighbors “have to use...to make them balance.” This verbal component of the wall-mending system asserts a second encoding upon the stones. Their arrangement in a material formation is followed by an appeal to a symbolic order. ““Stay where you are until our backs are turned!”” is a spell in the sense that it is a narrative command that operates through culturally recognized signifiers. Its necessity indicates that wall mending is a technique that processes “contingent codes” in being performed.<sup>27</sup> There are knowledges of building, of laying “stone on a stone” that inform the structure of the wall; these knowledges are contingent with

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<sup>25</sup> Siegert, “Doors,” 8.

<sup>26</sup> Frost, “Mending Wall,” 33-34.

<sup>27</sup> Siegert, “Doors,” 12.



knowledges of what a wall *is*, and what the rules are that govern its existence. In all, these knowledges comprise what Siegert has called, via Foucault, the “technical *a priori*” of the wall.<sup>28</sup> The wall, and the wall-building process, is conditioned by these knowledges, which precede the wall builders. These knowledges inhere both in the memories of the neighbors, and in the very form of the wall. The recursivity of mending provides the central conflict in the poem. What should be emphasized however, is that the process that the neighbors perform, and that the narrator questions, is a memorial process. The cyclical mending of walls ensures the memory of a technique literally passed down from the father, and historically mediated through the civil discourse of colonials like Winthrop.

By commanding the stones ““Stay where you are until our backs are turned!,”” the neighbors are bidding a stone to remember its place, but only as long as it does not endanger the neighbors’ own memories of its place. The narrator, in questioning the placement of stones, must direct his notions into a different substratum: the “head” of his neighbor. This questioning process is cyclically tied to spring (“the mischief in me”), which has previously been signified as “spring mending-time.” The seasonal coevalness of wall-mending and wall-questioning indicates that they comprise the same system. In mending the wall, and in reinstating knowledge of the wall, the neighbors also engage in dialectics about the wall that reinforce its symbolic attributes. These dialectics conjure the discourse of wall building, which includes the function of walls (“walling in or walling out”), ties them to a preceding human/animal distinction (“Why do [walls] make good neighbors? Isn’t it/ Where there are cows? /But here there are no cows.”), and even records what could be considered a crude legal description of the properties bounded by the wall (“He is all pine and I am apple orchard”). The discourse concludes with the “father’s saying,” which walls off the poem

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<sup>28</sup> Siegert, “The Map,” 14.

from the narrator's "mischief." In mending the wall, then, the neighbors have successfully remembered the law for at least another season, and have been made "good."

As Siegert emphasizes, "space and codes shift against each other in a permanently historical way." In order to be "culturally stabilized," the code that is the father's saying "needs [the] previous demarcations of space" provided by the wall. The material of the wall, however, shifts in two important ways. First, because "[buildings] and their arrangement of space emerge more quickly than codes can be established," the wall is always already subverting its role as symbolic architecture. Thus, there is a need for a "spell" to accompany its arrangement. Second, the residual structure of the material can "outlive the social codes that govern their organization of space and thus come into conflict with newer codes," which justifies the wall's mending, or the reformation of the wall according to an older code. In all, the praxis between the wall and the neighbors can be characterized as a "relationship of tension," in which different assemblages of codes program the wall, which in turn, carries these codes for the neighbors, but also outlasts the codes.<sup>29</sup> That the wall can become recoded as a gate, containing "gaps even two can pass abreast," or as a tenuous dwelling, in which one can find a "rabbit...hiding," is an indication of its flexible mediality, and of its multivalent histories. As concerns the neighbors, the wall's history begins with "the line" that they must "walk" to "set the wall between [them] once again." In walking the line, the neighbors trace the wall's particular genesis as a mark on a cadastral map. This underlying code places the wall in a specific Euro-American genealogy that not only contains Winthrop's lineage of Biblical legalism, but also Lockean ideas of private property, and Cartesian geometry. The cadastral line can furthermore be extended to the ancient Greek concept of *nomos*, which is translated as "law," but which signified the "measure and

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<sup>29</sup> Siegert, "Doors," 12.

division of pastureland,” and which, Carl Schmitt has stated, “can be described as a wall.”<sup>30</sup>

The cartographic line walked and reinforced by the neighbors thus mirrors the “father’s” idiomatic line, “Good fences make good neighbors,” in that both mediate a law predicated on land division, and both are reified by the physical orientation of the wall.

#### **IV. Entangled Technologies: A Media History of Fencing on the U.S.-Mexico Border**

The correspondence of cartographic lines, idiomatic lines, fences, and walls is also exemplified, with a proleptic twist, in a 1987 article in the *Christian Science Monitor* by Nadine Epstein. The piece begins by asserting that, “After an 1,800-mile wind through mountains, desert, and rangeland, the often-breached United States-Mexico border fence abruptly ends.”<sup>31</sup> Epstein’s proclamation of a historical material impossibility—technically, there was no 1,800-mile United States-Mexico border fence in 1987—is less important than what is revealed by the denotation of an “1,800-mile...border fence” dividing the U.S. and Mexico in the late 1980s. This copy-editing error outs the “border fence” as a discursive object in a way that differs from but also echoes Frost’s allegorical poem. Just as the neighbor of “Mending Wall” is unable to “go behind his father’s saying” to the bare existence of the cadastral line, so too is Epstein unable to go behind the “border fence” to the 1,800-mile border line that historically precedes it.

In both cases, the “darkness” that surrounds these spatial elisions threatens the temporal order. Whereas the conservative neighbor of “Mending Wall” seems to connote a pre-cartographic “old-stone savage[ry],” the misprint by Epstein suggests a science fiction in which the political desire to “just build a fence all the way across the southern border” has

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<sup>30</sup> Schmitt, *The Nomos*, 70.

<sup>31</sup> Epstein, “US-Mexico.”

been realized.<sup>32</sup> In their temporal ambiguities, the histories of these border spaces seem disordered; the replacement of “line” by “fence” indicates that, although the line would seem to precede the fence, perhaps its position “behind” the fence could also indicate that it comes after the fence. The confusion of fence and line, and the problematics faced by those who would put them in a proper order, reveals what Siegert calls an “ontological entanglement.” In other words, the marking of boundaries and the fencing of boundaries are “always already” intertwined techniques.<sup>33</sup> The fence is built into the line, and vice versa. Both lines and fences are technologies that “assume the position of a mediating third preceding first and second” and that process the “difference between inside and outside.” As asserted by Schmitt, quoting Jost Trier, “Fence, enclosure, and border, are deeply interwoven in the world formed by men [*sic*], determining its concepts.”<sup>34</sup> It seems obvious that where there is a fence, there is a boundary line. However, due to their implicated technicity, the opposite is also true: Where there is a boundary line, there is also a fence, in some form or another.

To put it more precisely, despite the narrator’s dictum in “Mending Wall” (“Before I built a wall I’d ask to know/ What I was walling in or walling out,/ And to whom I was like to give offense”) there is no “before I built a wall” that doesn’t also contain the proleptic trace of a wall. This necessarily qualifies the biopolitical solutions that the narrator proposes as an alternative to the sovereign mandate of the father’s saying. Although the narrator’s consideration of a population of “what” and “whom” as the targets of fencing establishes a modular environment for fencing, it also assumes the presence of a fence, if not as a production, then as a product always (al)ready for conditional deployment. Therein the double bind of fencing: It is a technique that can determine the distributed law of

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<sup>32</sup> United States, *Joint Hearing on Fencing*, 23.

<sup>33</sup> Siegert, “Cultural,” 55.

<sup>34</sup> Schmitt, *The Nomos*, 74.

bureaucracy as well as the unilinear law of sovereignty. Although Deleuze and Guattari assert, tautologically (perhaps with tongue in cheek), that in the society of control, “ce qui compte n'est pas la barrière, mais l'ordinateur qui repère la position de chacun [what counts is not the barrier but the computer that tracks each person's position],” I would rejoin that it is the barrier that produces the computer as a subject that ‘counts’—whether it is an infrastructural barrier networked to the computer, as in Guattari's imagination, a barrier that materially encloses the hardware of the computer, or a virtual barrier that moderates informational security, like a firewall.<sup>35</sup>

As scalar media tied to a “basal cultural technique,” fences remediate across political systems.<sup>36</sup> In the aftermath of purported historical turns from societies of sovereignty, to disciplinary societies, to societies of control, the persistence of fencing has come to signify what political scientist Wendy Brown calls “a series of paradoxes”: 1) Amid globalized fantasies of a “world without borders,” there remains a “passion for wall building.” 2) Despite the egalitarian affects of international democracy, democratic governments rely, in their infrastructures, on “not only barricades, but passageways through them segregating high-end business traffic, ordinary travelers, and aspiring entrants deemed suspect by virtue of origin or appearance.” 3) Amid a proliferation of industrial weaponry “historically unparalleled in their combined potency, miniaturization, and mobility,” walls continue to be deployed as “stark,” “physical” “answer[s]” to the threat of violence.<sup>37</sup> These paradoxes inhere, for Brown, in the plethora of “new walls striating the globe,” including the fencing of South Africa from Zimbabwe; Saudi Arabia from Yemen and Iraq; India from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar; Uzbekistan from Krygyzstan and Afghanistan; Turkmenistan

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<sup>35</sup> Deleuze, “Postscript,” 6.

<sup>36</sup> Siegert, “Cultural,” 61-62.

<sup>37</sup> Brown, *Walled States*, 20.

from Uzbekistan; China from North Korea; Brunei from Limbang; Egypt from Gaza; the list goes on. Amid the novelty of this “frenzied,” post-Cold War, fencing, Brown establishes the primacy of two particular projects: the “Israeli-built wall snaking through the West Bank,” and the “United States-built behemoth along its southern border.” These fences, Brown asserts, are not merely coeval, or politically resonant—they actually “share technology [and] subcontracting, and also refer to each other for legitimacy.”<sup>38</sup> The outcomes of these shared fencing operations are at least five different kinds of specially engineered fencing on the U.S.-Mexico border, as well as virtual layers, designed and constructed by military industrial firms like Boeing and Baker.<sup>39</sup>

Trier declares, “In the beginning was the fence”; in the history of the U.S.-Mexico border however, there have been many new fences, and thus many new beginnings.<sup>40</sup> A byproduct of the U.S.-Mexico War (1846-1848), the U.S.-Mexico border owes its linear existence to tense postwar treaty negotiations and to a binational boundary survey carried out between 1849 and 1855. As geographer Michael Dear asserts, the outcome of this survey was indeed a relationship of tension between codes and architecture, whereby the lines marked on the 54 boundary survey maps competed, for “legal claim,” with the line that spanned the 52 official markers “actually on the ground.” This ambiguity became officially cumbersome as “the borderlands’ population grew during the second half of the 19th century [and] disputes over the exact location of the boundary line became more frequent.” A second binational survey from 1891 to 1894 “amended” the line on the ground with 202 new, “iron columns 6

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 8-19.

<sup>39</sup> Maril, *The Fence*, 21; United States, *Border Fence Locations* [map].

<sup>40</sup> Schmitt, *The Nomos*, 74.

feet high, 12 inches square at the base, pyramidal in shape at the top, and set in concrete,” which were purchased in El Paso “at a cost of \$150 apiece.”<sup>41</sup>

In 1907, the line on the ground was itself thickened by Presidential Proclamation 758, in which Theodore Roosevelt “set apart as a public reservation, all public lands within sixty feet of the international boundary” to be “kept free from obstruction as a protection against the smuggling of goods between the United States and [Mexico].”<sup>42</sup> The context for Roosevelt’s terminology was what political scientist Peter Andreas calls “an old and diverse border smuggling economy,” in which “foreign goods” flowed both ways in contravention of customs duties.<sup>43</sup> As historian Patrick Ettinger asserts, a series of immigration acts in the late 19th and early 20th centuries established “immigrant smuggling and undocumented entry” as the exigency for border security.<sup>44</sup> Roosevelt’s line-thickening was a small, but important component of the escalating restructuring of border architecture that led, as historian Kelly Lytle Hernández shows, to the establishment of neighboring border policing organizations, including the U.S. Border Patrol in 1924, and the Mexican Border Patrol in 1953. The binational “cross-border systems of migration control” that developed in the early to mid-twentieth century incorporated “new technology” like fences and buslifts in order to apply “physical pressure” to, as Hernández argues, the racialized bodies of Mexican nationals.<sup>45</sup> The “new technology” of fencing was assembled, as Dear asserts, “along the line between monument and marker,” but it was also erected “2 or 3 feet north of the border,” in the strip set aside by Roosevelt’s proclamation, “in order that anyone who might be cutting it would

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<sup>41</sup> Dear, “Monuments.”

<sup>42</sup> U.S. President, “Reserving public.”

<sup>43</sup> Andreas, *Border Games*, 29-30.

<sup>44</sup> Ettinger, *Imaginary Lines*, 123.

<sup>45</sup> Hernández, *Migra!*, 7, 147.

illegally have entered the United States.”<sup>46</sup> This multilayered border infrastructure thickened the border by increasing its structural depth, but also created a no man’s land by drawing a new boundary line in the form of the fence.

Perhaps more important than the evacuative concept of no man’s land, is the idea that the multiple entanglements of line and fence on the U.S.-Mexico border have created a zone for what can be called, after Bruno Latour, new “associations” between “heterogeneous elements.”<sup>47</sup> In its aggregation of architectural forms, the U.S.-Mexico border became a series of perpendicular lines: what Hernández calls “*corridors* of migration control” through which binational policing, biopolitical intervention, economic and political migration, vigilante justice blocs, and cross-border friendship initiatives, act and connect.<sup>48</sup> Media theorist Kate Marshall argues that *corridors* process sociality by “invert[ing] and contest[ing] social relations at the same time that they shape them” in line with “domestic structures” of “privacy,” and “interiority.” The walls and fences that imbricate with these transborder corridors produce alternate social dynamics by mediating communicative practices of leaping (*brincar*); tunneling; crossing, talking, or touching *through*; building; and mending. A corridor “regulates the communication of and between bodies” by informing and informatizing those bodies in relays between interior, domestic spaces. In contrast, walls and fences determine the differences between inside and outside or domestic and foreign, deform the bodies that pass through, under, and over them, and are also deformed in these interactions.<sup>49</sup>

## V. Operations and Interactions: Gloria Anzaldúa’s Society of Fences

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<sup>46</sup> Dear, “Monuments”; Unites States, *Maintenance*, 13.

<sup>47</sup> Latour, *Reassembling*, 5.

<sup>48</sup> Hernández, *Migra!*, 128-153 (my emphasis).

<sup>49</sup> Marshall, *Corridor*, 24-25.



## Aberrations and Others / Bodies and Fences

Walls and fences mark bodies. The neighbors of “Mending Wall” “[wore their] fingers rough with handling boulders.” In journalist Sebastian Rotella’s 1998 account of the U.S.-Mexico border, “migrants dropping over the fence” regularly suffered “shattered feet, ankles, [and] legs.” Rotella narrates the story of a migrant who “sliced off his finger” on “the sharp metal edge” of a landing-mat fence, and “fell on the north side,” apart from the finger, which “fell on the south side.”<sup>50</sup> A little over a decade before Rotella—and in the same year that Nadine Epstein miswrote the borderline as an 1,800-mile fence in the *Christian Science Monitor*—Gloria Anzaldúa described the border as an “1,950 mile-long open wound” marked by “staking fence rods in [her] flesh.” Anzaldúa depicted this wound as a violent, but generative place in which the “lifeblood of two worlds [merged] to form a third country—a border culture.”<sup>51</sup> Dear sublimates this third country as “the third nation,” and he conceptualizes it as antithetical to a border wall.<sup>52</sup> However, Anzaldúa formulates the wall, or fence, as the very conditions of possibility for a third space, whether country or nation. In “The Homeland, Aztlán/ *El otro México*,” “border culture” emerges through the mechanical act of *grating* in the “borderland...created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary.”<sup>53</sup> Rather than downplaying the technological systems of control at work in the borderlands, Anzaldúa implicates them in the sociality of the region, and catalogues their vulnerabilities: their “rusted” forms, their “hole[s],” and gash[es].”

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<sup>50</sup> Rotella, “El Brinco,” 99.

<sup>51</sup> Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, 2-3.

<sup>52</sup> Dear, *Why Walls*, xi-xiii.

<sup>53</sup> Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, 2-3.

Ironically, by criticizing the border wall as an “aberration,” Dear assigns to it the stigma that Anzaldúa reclaims in her own work.<sup>54</sup> It is for just this sort of confusion that theorist Victor M. Ortiz-González has criticized Anzaldúa, arguing that her “characterization of the region as the ‘bizarre’” “elides much of its reality,” and ultimately is used to justify outlandish methods of political intervention. In Ortiz-González’s formulation, the aberrant signifiers in Anzaldúa’s work dislocate the border region into a “representation” that invites aberrant localized realities (like the fence).<sup>55</sup> However, I think it is important to note that Anzaldúa does not merely draw an “image of the border,” but rather diagrams it as chains of operations with infrastructural forms.

In the span of 54 lines from “The Homeland, Aztlán/ *El otro México*” Anzaldúa writes of seven different interactions with the border fence. She describes watching waves gashing holes in the fence; walking through a hole in the fence; touching and feeling the “gritty wire of the fence” (which is anachronistically rusted by 139 years of sea air); pressing her hand to the fence and, not unlike Epstein—but with more pathos—imagining it “rippling” from Tijuana all the way to South Texas. Fence rods split her flesh “down the length of [her] body;” she establishes a home at “this thin edge of barbwire;” and finally, she recounts how the Yoruban sea goddess Yemaya “blew that wire fence down.” These operations implicate the infrastructure in distinct ways; different assemblages of bodies and fences mediate different symbolic processes and communicative practices. A naturalistic image of a body of water “gashing” at the fence transcends after a series of verses into an image of the divine destruction of the fence. The intimate practice of touching the fence reveals a supple, rippling, formation capable of connecting a cartographically broken poetic borderline by

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<sup>54</sup> Dear, *Why Walls*, 172.

<sup>55</sup> Ortiz-González, *El Paso*, 11-14.

unrolling over mountains  
and plains  
and deserts.

In these operations, the fence is recursive, multi-faceted and multi-form. In carefully distributing different types of fencing across her verse, Anzaldúa includes fences as agents in the relationships that are associated with a border “in a constant state of transition.”<sup>56</sup> Fences determine the political act of marking space, but they too are determined by the space they mark, by the ongoing operations of fencing, and by their own histories. As Anzaldúa shows, fences have their own borders, their own marks of difference from each other. In “The Homeland, Aztlán/ *El otro México*,” she classifies three fences: a woven material capable of being gashed into holes, a series of solidly staked rods, and a thin edge of barbed wire.

#### **‘This Thin Edge of Barbwire’**

As attested above, the infrastructure on the U.S.-Mexico border exists in semiotic tension with cartographic lines. On maps, symbols of the borderline elide those of the border fence. However, the hand-drawn map in author Mary Kidder Rak’s 1938 hagiography *Border Patrol* contains a distinctive representation of a barbed wire fence spanning from Texas’ Big Bend National Park to the El Paso/Juarez area (Figure 1). The fence is an exceptional cartographic assertion, because it indicates some 300 miles of barbed wire amid few other icons of a security structure, save a mounted Border Patrol agent heading south at full gallop. Turning the page, the reader encounters a photograph of another border technology: an emergent surveillance infrastructure in the form of “a steel watch tower, complete with crow’s nest” (Figure 2). These two images indicate that, by the 1930s, the U.S.-Mexico border was already subject to what architect Eyal Weizman has called—in critiquing Israel’s security architecture—the “politics of verticality.” In this formulation, political territory is

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<sup>56</sup> Anzaldúa, *Borderlands*, 1-3.

divided not only in two-dimensional Cartesian space, but also in the third dimension, with space above and below ground level being annexed to political imperatives.<sup>57</sup> The network of tunnels that connected Chinese border enclaves in Mexicali and Calexico in the early-to-mid 20th century, would be a concurrent, albeit subterranean configuration of the border's politics of verticality. Vollmann attests that in their "golden age," the tunnels functioned as corridors of a literally subaltern domesticity, housing living spaces, cantinas, and shops.<sup>58</sup>

The bi-dimensional security structure shown in Rak's text not only divided air- and ground-space, but also produced difference by its semiotic and technical processing. The crow's nest invokes a non-human, "bird's eye" view to monitor *human* others. The barbed wire fence is specifically constructed to contain and control *non*-human others—livestock in particular. As asserted above, barbed wire establishes a human/non-human distinction by remediating vegetative impediments (its Spanish name is *alambre de espio* [wire of thorns]). As both Robert J. Duncan and Netz have asserted, the barbed wire fence emerged as an artificial replacement for unsustainable "thorn bushes and hedges" in the western United States.<sup>59</sup> A serendipitous "extension of existing technologies" of iron- and steel-wire manufacture, barbed wire transformed 'natural' structures of violence into cost-effective industrial infrastructure that enabled flexible control of capitalized animal populations.<sup>60</sup> The barbed wire fence blockading western Texas in the map from Rak's text belongs to this archaeology: It was presumably a range fence constructed to keep livestock that carried fever ticks from crossing into the United States from Mexico.<sup>61</sup> In this way, it resembled the

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<sup>57</sup> Weizman, *Hollow Land*, 12-13.

<sup>58</sup> Vollmann, *Imperial*, 476-478.

<sup>59</sup> Duncan, "Devil's Hatband," 197; Netz, *Barbed Wire*, 23.

<sup>60</sup> Netz, *Barbed Wire*, 28.

<sup>61</sup> Goin, *Tracing*, n.p.; Unites States, *Maintenance*, 21. I say "presumably" because there is not ample evidence that a vast barbed wire fence in west Texas ever really existed at the scale to which it is drawn on Rak's map. Conversation with Nicole Guidotti-Hernández and C.J. Alvarez at UT Austin in February 2015 has further

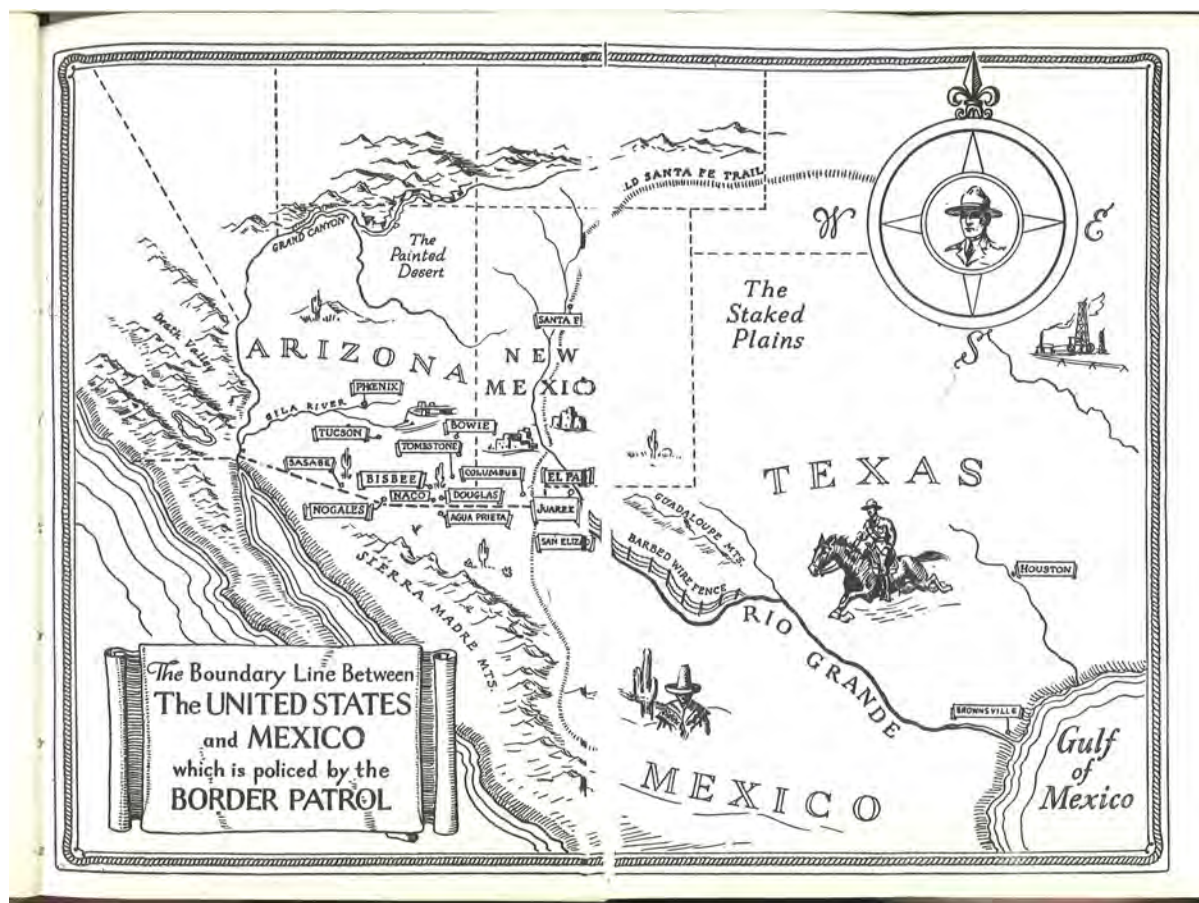


Figure 1. Enclosed map featuring a barbed wire fence in Mary Kidder Rak's *Border Patrol*.



An observer in a steel watch tower, complete with crow's nest, has a comprehensive view of both banks of the Rio Grande.

Figure 2. Historic Border Patrol crows nest in Texas, as seen in Rak's *Border Patrol*.

convinced me that the barbed wire fence drawn on Rak's map is mostly fictive. If anything it may represent the fences erected by ranchers on private property adjoining the border.

“drift fences” that also ran for “many miles east and west” across the Panhandle and West Texas “to prevent the mingling of large herds from the north” as they migrated south in the winter.<sup>62</sup> From a distance, this multilayered, barbed wire infrastructure resembles the corridors of policing control attested by Hernández. Indeed, as Netz recounts, all legitimated U.S. cattle bodies ultimately traveled one large corridor: southwest to northeast, in different formulations of traffic (“Raise in Texas; kill in Chicago; eat in New York”<sup>63</sup>).

The social and political effects of barbed wire networks have been addressed above, in the historical context of Frost’s “Mending Wall,” because in the era circumscribing Frost’s writing, barbed wire’s use in determining differences between human and non-human animals began to shift toward the paradigm of security. If barbed wire regulates cattle by violently guiding it into the domestic sphere, it governs human beings differently, by enforcing their exteriority, their otherness, and their animality. The “sweep of barbed wire” from “agriculture to warfare and human repression,” as summarized by Netz, was programmed in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, where it was used to reduce species to bodies. First, in the late 19th century, “fragmentation” by wire “imprisoned” Indigenous populations in “foreign territory,” while also strategically conflating national, human, and non-human animal boundaries.<sup>64</sup> By 1909 these strategic confluences had entered policy on the U.S.-Mexico border. A report made that year by the U.S. Bureau of Animal Industry about range fence on the border between California and Baja California states, “with this fence installed,

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<sup>62</sup> Duncan, “Devil’s Hatband,” 204.

<sup>63</sup> Netz, *Barbed Wire*, 48.

<sup>64</sup> Netz, *Barbed Wire*, xiii; Razac, *Barbed Wire*, 21-22.

eradication [of fever tick infestation] will soon be accomplished...Such a fence will also assist customs officials in preventing illegal traffic between the two countries.”<sup>65</sup>

Barbed wire proved so effective for managing the distinctions between humans and cattle, cattle and diseased cattle, and U.S. and Mexican nationals, that by 1987—the year Epstein misattributed an 1,800-mile border fence, and Anzaldúa imagined a 1,950-mile open wound—photographer Peter Goin reported that “most of the [border] fence [was] barbed wire.” Besides barbed wire, there was fencing in the form of chain link, but as Goin attested, in his photographic survey, *Tracing the Line*, chain-link fencing spanned for “no more than 15 miles total along the entire border.”<sup>66</sup> However long it was, the barbed wire border, and the conflated distinctions it generated between humans, animals, and citizens, signified the borderlands as a barely closed frontier, a “lethal” place structured by an “alien” technology, that was, in the words of landscape theorist John B. Jackson, a profoundly anti-domestic landscape.<sup>67</sup> The implications of a barbed wire border are ultimately severe on both sides of the wire, for as Netz asserts, “the topology of [barbed wire] does not [actually] distinguish inside from outside—[double pointed barbs are] projected in both ways.”<sup>68</sup> To make one’s *home* on a “thin edge of barbwire,” as Anzaldúa diagrams it in “The Homeland, Aztlán/ *El otro México*,” is to live as a body without the distinction of culture: a body against a fence, radically engaged in the subaltern economy of the animal.

## VI. ‘Perfectamente natural mezclar’: Implications of *The Crystal Frontier*

### ‘At Least a Simple Fence’

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<sup>65</sup> United States, *Twenty-Sixth Annual*, 290.

<sup>66</sup> Goin, *Tracing*, n.p.

<sup>67</sup> Jackson, “Barbed Wire,” 66.

<sup>68</sup> Netz, *Barbed Wire*, 35.

In his 1985 novel *Gringo Viejo*, author Carlos Fuentes also imagined the U.S.-Mexico border as *una herida*—a wound.<sup>69</sup> A decade later he diagrammed the border in more technological terms, as *La frontera de cristal*, the title to his 1995 “novel in nine stories.” In the book’s final story, “Río Grande, Río Bravo,” a Mexican-American Border Patrol agent named Mario Islas, who is stationed on overnight surveillance, imagines a series of technological solutions to the hazards of his job:

Las noches eran largas y peligrosas y a veces él hubiera querido que todo el Río Grande, Río Bravo, estuviera de veras dividido por una cortina de fierro, una zanja profundísima por lo menos una reja de corral que tuviera el poder de impedir el paso de los ilegales.

The nights were long and dangerous and sometimes he wished the whole Río Grande, Río Bravo really were divided by an iron curtain, a deep, deep ditch, or at least a simple fence that would keep the illegals from passing.<sup>70</sup>

To conjure this infrastructural hyperborder, Mario references global sites of security and control. In wishing that the borderlands were *truly* (de veras) divided by one of the technologies he references, he also reflexively acknowledges political criticism of U.S. border policy, although he cannot “really” see what is so divisive. There are military connotations to the first two technologies that he imagines: The “cortina de fierro” could reference—just half a decade after the fall of the Berlin Wall—a Cold War superstructure sealing the border. The “zanja profundísima” could likewise connote the trenches of the First World War. These connotations however, obscure more quotidian infrastructural meanings for these words. While *cortina de fierro* is translated as ‘iron curtain,’ it more commonly

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<sup>69</sup> Fuentes, *Gringo Viejo*, 16. At the beginning of the book, the border is metaphorized as a wound; at the end of the book it is called *una cicatriz*, a scar.

<sup>70</sup> Fuentes, *La frontera*, 269; Fuentes, *The Crystal Frontier*, 240.



signifies the metal curtain that is used to protect storefronts, and not the monumental geopolitical architecture, which is typically translated as *la Cortina de Hierro*. In the same vein, *una zanja* is commonly an irrigation canal or a ditch dug to lay pipes. The irony in this terminology reflects the ambivalent infrastructure of the border, in which municipal utilities combine with national symbols.

The irony of the third technology imagined by Mario is further multiplied by its translation. What was originally published as “una reja de corral”—or a corral fence—becomes, in Alfred MacAdam’s translation, “a simple fence.” Without delving too far into the task of the translator, I want to address the connotations that are elided in this shift. If a barbed wire fence marks the distant edge of domestic space, a corral fence sits much closer to home, being the containment technology for more domesticated animals like horses and chickens. An additional meaning for *reja de corral* is “playpen.” The set of relations mediated by a corral fence is paternal and agricultural—more intimate, and more stratified than those of the range fence. To wish for a corral fence is to engage in a discourse that has already animalized migration in farming dialectics as a system of “pollos” and “coyotes.” Perhaps this is the reason for MacAdam’s “simple fence.” In such a situation, the *least* that the good farmer—the mediator—can do to protect the chickens is to erect a fence.

MacAdam’s translation to “a simple fence” also relocates Mario’s third imagined technology into an idiom of efficiency and technicity. In terms of capital, a simple fence could be barbed wire—with a minimum of labor and production costs it generates a maximum of profit. It could also be chain link, which is “manufactured, delivered, and built cheaply, quickly, and on a mass scale,” and able to “endure heavy and repeated stress.”<sup>71</sup> In the context of the border, chain link became a novel security medium in the mid-20th

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<sup>71</sup> Dreicer, “Wired!,” 69.

century, although not without its own dialectical connotations and capital considerations. Hernández recounts that in 1945, in order to “confront [a] rise in illegal crossings” on the California border, the INS installed 4,500 feet of 10 foot-high chain-link fence between Calexico and Mexicali. The fence itself was not new, however. It was a byproduct of a kind of media archaeology, having been excavated from the perimeter of a newly defunct Japanese-American Internment Camp in Crystal City, California.<sup>72</sup> This especially “simple” fencing solution to a border problem reveals military and agricultural genealogies for the “reja de corral” of Fuentes’ text. Chain link traces its genealogy to a 19th-century need for cost-effective farm fencing that performed less violently than barbed wire. The U.S. government thereafter used chain link fencing to mark distinctions between foreign and domestic foes in the Second World War.<sup>73</sup> At the close of the war, chain link fencing was re-engineered to mark distinctions in an international labor market that sought to domesticate the foreign through agricultural accords like the Bracero program.

### **Global Networks, Global Borders, Global Fencing**

*La frontera de cristal* was published in response to major political restructurings in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. The implementation of NAFTA on January 1, 1994, the state of California’s approval of Proposition 187 later that year, and the launch of Operation Blockade/Hold the Line and Operation Gatekeeper in 1993 and 1994, respectively, all predicated a new spectrum of associations over the line. While NAFTA “encouraged the mobility of capital, production, and manufacturing throughout the region,” Proposition 187, and operations Blockade/ Hold the Line and Gatekeeper established barriers to the social and

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<sup>72</sup> Hernández, *Migra!*, 130-131.

<sup>73</sup> Dreicer, “Wired!,” 73.

physical mobility of migrants.<sup>74</sup> Fuentes' agent Mario Islas in "Río Grande, Río Bravo" finds himself performing the role of the human wall required of Border Patrol agents in operations Blockade/ Hold the Line and Gatekeeper. His desire for a mix of more permanent technological barriers to take the place of his vulnerable body is balanced by his awareness of a physics of vulnerability that is being institutionally exploited for pyrrhic victories:

lo que ellos los de la patrulla fronteriza hacían era apretar un globo: lo que se apretaba por aquí sólo volvía a inflar por allá; no tenía remedio...

What they, the Border Patrol, were doing was squeezing a balloon: what you squeezed here only swelled out over there. There was no solution...<sup>75</sup>

Doris Meissner, INS Commissioner from 1993-2000, euphemized the policy of squeezing migrants into restricted, deserted, and hazardous corridors of mobility as, "[using] geography [as] an ally." As a border enforcement strategy, "using geography as an ally" was more or less responsible for "nearly seventeen hundred migrant deaths along the border between 1994 and mid-2000."<sup>76</sup> More abstractly, the metaphor of the balloon used by Mario Islas connotes globalization and the fluctuations of international markets, as Mario contemplates:

Esta pobre gente sólo venía buscando trabajo. No le quitaba trabajo a nadie. ¿Fue culpa de los mexicanos que cerraran las industrias de guerra y hubiera más desempleados? Pues hubieran seguido la guerra contra el imperio del mal, como la llamaba Reagan.

These poor people only came looking for work. They weren't taking work away from anyone. Was it the Mexicans' fault the defense plants were closed and there was more

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<sup>74</sup> Hernández, *Migra!*, 229.

<sup>75</sup> Fuentes, *La frontera*, 268; Fuentes, *The Crystal Frontier*, 239.

<sup>76</sup> Hernández, *Migra!*, 229.

unemployment? They should have continued the war against the evil empire, as Reagan called it.<sup>77</sup>

The post-Cold War flows of immigration referenced by Mario were met by flows in the form of repurposed materiel, as if to underscore a lack of military industrial production. Operation Gatekeeper deployed a new wave of border fencing, albeit one that departed significantly from what the U.S. Senate had once called “town fence” (chain link), and “ranch-type fence” (barbed wire).<sup>78</sup> Granting Mario Islas’ wishes for *una cortina de fierro*, the new border wall of the 1990s “was built by U.S. Army reservists out of 180,000 metal sheets originally made for landing fields during military operations.” As political scientist Peter Andreas ruefully observed, “Mexicans...dubbed it the ‘Iron Curtain.’”<sup>79</sup> These recycled steel walls, constructed by transforming a portable, horizontal military technology into a stationary, vertical security device forced would-be migrants to perilously “leap between worlds.”<sup>80</sup> Vollmann, considering landing-mat fences as vertical corridors, described the new process of crossing as methods of “flow[ing] up and down that metal fence in strange and elegant ways.”<sup>81</sup>

Escalations of border technology throughout the late nineties culminated in what Andreas calls the “‘border control’ failures” of September 11. In the decade or so following that day, the policy agenda has been driven by U.S. “worries and anxieties” into a “security climate” of “militariz[ed] immigration control.”<sup>82</sup> As discussed in the introduction, this psychological state expresses itself as what architect Fernando Romero has called the *hyperborder*—“a place shaped by numerous complexities and unique levels of

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<sup>77</sup> Fuentes, *La frontera*, 269; Fuentes, *The Crystal Frontier*, 240.

<sup>78</sup> Unites States, *Maintenance*, 13.

<sup>79</sup> Andreas, *Border Games*, xi.

<sup>80</sup> Rotella, “El Brinco,”

<sup>81</sup> Vollmann, *Imperial*, 12.

<sup>82</sup> Andreas, *Border Games*, 155-156.

hyperactivity.”<sup>83</sup> This hyperactive condition, part and parcel of what Brown dubbed the “frenzied” fence-building of the 2000s, dictates that a “a simple fence” will no longer work. As mentioned above, at least five different types of engineered fencing proliferate on the U.S.-Mexico border, as well as electronic surveillance and tracking networks comprising a virtual fence, as designed and constructed by global military industrial firms.<sup>84</sup> One could say that the fence *stakes* described by Anzaldúa have switched signification—a fence stake is now a six-figure bid by a global contractor like Boeing or Honeywell. In the logic of capital, this is a rising tide, and indeed, as Vollmann reports, escalating the fence has led to perverse forms of upward mobility, in that fencing selects out migrants who are “agile as well as desperate” enough to climb.<sup>85</sup> Fencing rewards not only the contractors who build fences, but also the private enterprises who negotiate them. By the late 1990s, the landing-mat fence, “more than any other factor had inflated coyotes’ prices from two hundred to twelve hundred dollars a head.”<sup>86</sup>

This project argues that *hyperborder* is not only a frenzied set of social associations, but that it also accounts for the border as an extension across media. In this sense, the multilayered fence, with its different genealogies, is a hyperborder, as is the communication infrastructure that deterritorializes the domestic into big data and produces distinctions from atmospheric heights. Although operating at drastically different scales, the informatic hyperborder and the hyperfence are not only yoked together in the border security system, but they also share material histories. Chain link and barbed wire fences trace their genealogies to the 19th-century manufacturing techniques that enabled the revolution of the

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<sup>83</sup> Romero, *Hyperborder*, 42.

<sup>84</sup> Maril, *The Fence*, 21; Brown, *Walled States*, 8.

<sup>85</sup> Vollmann, *Imperial*, 13.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*

telegraph.<sup>87</sup> The new fence infrastructure is likewise produced in an ironic tandem with communication technology. In the late 1990s, Baker, the lead commercial engineering firm associated with the Secure Fence Act, designed and constructed the fiber optic and microwave telecommunications network that connects Mexico's major cities with those the United States.<sup>88</sup>

### **Mixing Forms**

In a 2006 joint hearing before the Committees on Homeland Security and Government Reform, Kevin Stevens, the Senior Associate Chief of Customs and Border Protection, describes the Border Patrol's strategic resources as a "mix":

We need, for border control, for border security, we need that appropriate mix. It's not about fences. It's not about Border Patrol agents. It's not about technology. It's about all of those things.<sup>89</sup>

Discourse on the "mix" dominates Stevens' time at the hearing. He also describes the "mix" in terms of physical and social conditions:

Meeting the elements of border control will require this appropriate mix of personnel, infrastructure technology, rapid mobility, and enforcement capability. The mix of those different components of the border control or border security mix will depend on the terrain, the activity levels. Urban environments are going to require a different mix of those sources than maybe the more remote or rural environments.<sup>90</sup>

Stevens' characterization of the borderlands as a series of contingent forms requiring "different components" for control amid different "activity levels" diagrams the region as a

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<sup>87</sup> Dreicer, "Wired!," 69-70.

<sup>88</sup> United States, "Honoring."

<sup>89</sup> United States, *Fencing*, 33.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

hyperborder, and also recalls the biopolitical list of conditions for fencing proposed by the narrator of “Mending Wall” (what, whom, walling in, walling out, pines, apple orchard). In describing his composition process for *La frontera de cristal*, ten years prior to Stevens’ hearing, Fuentes also insisted upon expedient mixtures, stressing that “Una lección que siempre aprendí de Cervantes es aceptar la mezcla y no aceptar la tiranía de los géneros” (“One lesson I always learned from Cervantes is to accept the mixture and not to accept the tyranny of genre”).<sup>91</sup> Continuing, Fuentes outlined the particular mixture of his “novel in nine stories,” stating that its form and structure displayed a:

Perfectamente natural mezclar la ficción, el reportaje, el análisis, la parodia, el carnaval grotesco... Porque la vida de esa frontera tiene una vitalidad y una variedad increíble que no puede contenerse dentro de un solo estilo o de un solo género literario.<sup>92</sup>

Perfectly natural mixture of fiction, reportage, parody, and grotesque carnival...Because the life of the border has such an incredible vitality and variety, it cannot be contained within one single style or literary genre.

Drawing an ontological link between literature and life, Fuentes asserts that his mix of style and genre, and the refractive, “crystalline” plots of his nine stories—with their recurring characters and themes—should be seen as a viable reflection of a living border. In this way Fuentes taxonomizes what Stevens, of the Border Patrol, later technologizes. Where Stevens speaks in terms of “components” requiring different control solutions, Fuentes diagrams diverse life “styles” that necessitate different artistic methods of capture.

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<sup>91</sup> Qtd. in Cavestany, “Carlos Fuentes.”

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., translation mine.

Conversely, Stevens also relies on the term “environments,” and Fuentes implicates technological media as components in the “life of the border.” The *cristal* of his title symbolizes the border as a lattice structure, or as a kind of grid network through which both optics and electronics can be conducted; alternately it establishes the border as a glass window, or a lens through which binational strangers communicate; additionally, it conceives of the border as a mirror. As demonstrated throughout the book’s multifaceted narratives, and especially by its titular story, a crystal frontier is a border suffused with media, a hyperborder extending far beyond its geographical station and historical predicates. Cultural distinctions are mediated through structural extensions of the border—including fences, skyscrapers, bridges, maquiladoras, tunnels, a wheelchair, and airplanes.

### **The Border As Lens: Processing Difference**

The story “La frontera de cristal” outlines the stakes of the hyperborder in the early days of NAFTA, Operation Gatekeeper, and Proposition 187. It is a kind of dystopian science fiction, presenting a speculative history that occurs “Apenas aprobado el Tratado de Libre Comercio [As soon as the North American Free Trade Agreement had gone into effect].” In order to take advantage of the new marketplace, the tycoon of Fuentes’ text, Don Leonardo Barroso, has convinced U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich to classify migrant Mexican workers as foreign trade in services. A binational consortium of businessmen has devised a plan to fly a planeload of Mexican laborers on a weekend service contract into Manhattan to clean buildings and then to return them by plane to Mexico immediately, securing corporate savings of 25 to 30 percent over customary labor arrangements. The story’s settings—the plane, the apartment, the office, and the skyscraper—appear as nodes in an extended network of borders distributed from Mexico City to New York.



In the title story, and throughout the book, the plane functions as a paradigm for transnational mobility that determines new borders of spatial dislocation and economic class. As a device used for “evitar el paso por la frontera [avoiding the crossing of the border],” and for delivering Mexican labor to economic sites in the United States, the plane in “La frontera de cristal” continues historic systems of migration control like buslifts and planelifts. However, the narration emphasizes that the plane also functions as a writing implement—“un lápiz de aluminio [an aluminum pencil]”—that rewrites economic boundaries.

As the plane draws the migrants away from Mexico, and into commercial networks as foreign services, it revises the migrants’ image of home (*oikos*, the root of economy). Early in the story the protagonist, Lisandro Chávez, a young man from Mexico City, attempts to look out the window of the airplane, but his view is blocked by “su compañero de la derecha que miraba intensamente a las nubes como si recobrara una patria olvidada [his colleague to the right, staring at the clouds profoundly, as if recovering a lost homeland]” (189). Ultimately Lisandro decides to keep his eyes closed for the remainder of the trip because he is afraid of looking down and discovering:

Algo horrible que quizás sólo desde el cielo podía verse; ya no había Mexico, el país era una ficción o, más bien, un sueño mantenido por un puñado de locos que alguna vez creyeron en la existencia de México. (191)

Something horrible that could be seen only from the air. There was no homeland anymore, no such thing as Mexico; the country was a fiction, or rather, a dream maintained by a handful of madmen who at one time believed in the existence of Mexico.

Crossing atmospheric boundaries “sin visible sostén [with no visible means of support]” the plane momentarily disconcerts Lisandro’s picture of his family’s economic history, which stands in for the turbulence of the Mexican middle class. Leaving behind “veinte años de crisis, deuda, quiebra, esperanzas renovadas sólo para caer de nueva cuenta en la crisis, cada seis años, cada vez más, la pobreza, el desempleado... [twenty years of crisis, debt, bankruptcy, hopes raised only to fall again with a crash, every six years, more and more poverty, unemployment...]” (191-192), Lisandro is confronted with the impossibility of retaining his vision of his homeland. In the airplane, Mexico is only a reflection in his mind, or more darkly, an image of the indistinct landmass of interconnected North America in the glass of the airplane’s window.

The plane also sublimates the displacement that Lisandro’s family has already endured in the wakes of the “inflación del 85 y...la devaluación del 95 [inflation of ‘85 and ... the devaluation of ‘95],” in the aftermath of his father’s soft-drink business failing as the industry became “concentró y consolidó en un par de monopolios [concentrated and consolidated in a pair of monopolies]” (192), in the event of moving to an apartment in Colonia Narvarte after failing to pay their mortgage in Cuauhtémoc. Lisandro is taking the risk that by being traded to the United States as a service, he can hold back the neoliberal border that has extended southward across Mexico, and transformed his family into “extranjero[s] en su propia ciudad de México [foreigner[s] in [their] own Mexico City] ” (198-199).

Lisandro arrives in snow-covered Manhattan, a place only familiar to him “gracias al cine [thanks to movies]” (198). He and his countrymen learn their task: They must clean the interior glass walls of a skyscraper “todo de cristal, sin un solo material que no fuese

transparente [completely of glass...without a single material that wasn't transparent." The crystal frontier is revealed as a system of glass walls that conceals the mechanisms of capital through the illusion of transparency. As the narration describes it, the building represents capital as a whimsical but risky game. Its structure resembles an "inmensa caja de música hecha de espejos...un palacio de barajas de cristal [Immense music box made of mirrors...a crystal palace of cards]" (200). Industrious about his work, Lisandro's "objetivo [es] el cristal [objective is the glass]" that produces his subjectivity amid the refractions of capital (205).

The crystal frontier does not mediate not between nature and civil society, but rather between the bureaucratic spaces of commerce and civil society. In this framework, civil society represents an outside, and commerce an inside. The skyscraper is an aperture that allows civil society to enter, but not to permeate. As Lisandro discovers while washing the uppermost windows of the building, the crystal frontier cannot be crossed. Glass walls are not mended or climbed over, but rather cleaned and gazed through.

In a paradigm shift, the border becomes not merely a line or a fence, but a lens. Lisandro cleans the lens, and as he removes "una leve película de polvo y ceniza [a light film of dust and ash] (205-206), a white woman appears amid the apertures of capital. She is Audrey, an advertising executive working on the weekend, who is revealed as Lisandro wipes away dust "como afocar una cámara [as if focusing a camera]" (206). As the two characters become curious about each other, the glass wall between them determines their communication as a pantomime. In the light of the glass, racial and national typologies flare up—Mexican Lisandro is courteous, sad, and joyful; gringa Audrey is melancholy, yet passionate. The story becomes romantically, even cinematically exaggerated: Audrey

imagines him in “toda clase de situaciones [all kinds of situations].” Lisandro wants badly “tocarla aunque fuese a través del cristal [to touch her, even if only through the glass]” (209).

Lisandro and Audrey come to love the glass wall of capital, because it is all they can do in their “comunidad irónica...en el aislamiento [ironic community...in isolation]” (210). As each character kisses one side of the crystal frontier, “los labios se [unen] a través del vidrio [their lips come together through the glass]” (211). They are, as Siegert phrases it, “decentered onto the technical object.”<sup>93</sup> Lisandro’s sacrifice of himself as a foreign service is redeemed by his connection with Audrey through the glass wall. However, it is an anxious redemption, one that reveal[s] the extent to which both Lisandro and Audrey have already been overdetermined by symbolic reflections, whether based upon cinematic or national imaginaries. The parodic nature of the characters’ kiss, mediated through glass “durante varios minutos [for several minutes],” is preceded by their written self-identifications. As Audrey writes on the glass with her lipstick she notices that written backwards, “como en un espejo [as in a mirror],” her name resembles “un nombre exótico, de diosa india [an exotic name, of an Indian goddess].”<sup>94</sup> Lisandro matches Audrey’s “YERDUA” not with his name, but with his nationality, similarly backwards: “NACIXEM.” In this way, Fuentes’ crystal frontier—the border as lens, or as interface—reveals difference as a problematic of processing. Subjects are produced through technical operations that process, in the terms of José David Saldívar, a “contest of codes and representations.”<sup>95</sup> However, how do these processes distort others in their determining of information? Who claims control over border technologies that reduce laborers to nationalized services, women to conceits of capital, and Indians to phenomena of literal backwardness?

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<sup>93</sup> Siegert, “Doors,” 8.

<sup>94</sup> Fuentes, *La frontera*, 211.

<sup>95</sup> Saldívar, “The Limits,” 259.

## VII. Lines Upon Lines Upon Lines: Problematics of Imperial Delineations

*La frontera de cristal* expresses a crystalline border structure not only through narrative content and formal feedback of plots and characters, but also, extra-diagetically, in the social network that Fuentes establishes by making dedications for each story. The eleven people linked through the novel—Héctor Aguilar Camín, Julio Ortega, Sealtiel Alatríste, Jorge Castañeda, Enrique Cortazar, Pedro Garay, Carlos Salas-Porras, [Fuentes' sister] Berta, Jorge Bustamante, César Antonio Molina, David Carrasco—index politics, literature, and academe in Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, and the United States. By linking these figures through his text Fuentes demonstrates that the novel, as a media technology for narrative form, can be discretely hacked to present a global, transnational social network, a crystal lattice of affiliation.

In reconsidering the novel as a media technology Vollmann is far more intolerant than Fuentes of the so-called tyranny of genre. His “novel” *Imperial* is 1,306 pages, and divided up into thirteen parts that include 208 chapters. Five hand-drawn maps accompany the body text, as well as a glossary, and an appendix consisting of the meta-commentary “Concerning the Maps.” Additional information consists of “A Chronology of *Imperial*,” lists of “Sources” and of “Persons Interviewed,” a “Bibliography,” “Credits,” and lastly, “Acknowledgments.” Having taken nearly ten years to write, *Imperial* takes as its purview the historical breadth of modernity, from the year 1519 to 2007. The book weighs nearly five pounds. An unscientific sampling of customer reviews from amazon.com reveals praise such as, “can best be understood as a Twentieth Century equivalent to ‘Moby Dick’ [sic],”<sup>96</sup> balanced by condemnation such as, “I suspect the author thinks he is doing Fine Writing. But

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<sup>96</sup> David Loyd, customer review of William T. Vollmann's *Imperial*, “And can best be understood,” *amazon.com*, July 26, 2014, [http://www.amazon.com/review/R1NSQ77UN70UQ/ref=cm\\_srch\\_res\\_rtr\\_alt\\_2](http://www.amazon.com/review/R1NSQ77UN70UQ/ref=cm_srch_res_rtr_alt_2)

his story is buried under so much hyperbole and wanderings, staggering on for more than a thousand pages, that the reader is not impressed but gagging.”<sup>97</sup> I submit these merely as testimony of how one discourse community approaches *Imperial*. I will concede that it is a difficult book to read. For another approach, a book of over 200 photographs, which were taken and captioned by Vollmann, was published alongside the novel.

The difficulty of Vollmann’s text is in proportion to the problematics that he is examining. Among a vast catalog of political and social issues explored in *Imperial*—water rights, pollution, migrant labor, poverty, corruption, urbanization, U.S. exceptionalism, U.S.-Mexico relations, policing, xenophobia, interrogation, globalization; the list goes on—I am identifying “Delineations” (the title of the second chapter) as Vollmann’s central problem. *Imperial* is a book ostensibly about Imperial County, California, which sits, geographically, directly east of San Diego County, north of the Mexican state of Baja California, and west of Arizona. Vollmann begins delineating this space by undercutting the ability of “defectively wearisome [cartographic] rectangles” to aptly mediate it:

It may well be that since this southeast corner of California is so peculiar, enigmatic, sad, beautiful, and perfect as it stands, delineation of any sort should be foregone in favor of the recording of “pure” perceptions, for instance by means of a camera alone; or, failing that, by reliance on word-pictures: a cityscape of withered palms, white tiles, glaring parking lots, and portico-shaded loungers who watch the boxcars groan by...<sup>98</sup>

From there, Vollmann pays attention to “the Official Line.” He traces a map by symbolizing its icons, like the “authoritative red downsnake of Interstate 8,” and “the straight line of the

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<sup>97</sup> Dan, customer review of William T. Vollmann’s *Imperial*, “Really bad,” *amazon.com*, November 17, 2011, [http://www.amazon.com/review/R2MBU1GJ6TBFMF/ref=cm\\_srch\\_res\\_rtr\\_alt\\_1](http://www.amazon.com/review/R2MBU1GJ6TBFMF/ref=cm_srch_res_rtr_alt_1)

<sup>98</sup> Vollmann, *Imperial*, 41. In-text citations follow.

Mexican border sloping slightly northeastward,” and then he departs from cartographic space to place the line “alongside rusty segments of American wall, with Mexico dim on our right” (42). This miscellany of the borderline and its milieu finally gives way to what Vollmann calls “Annexations”:

Loyalty to literalism would have constrained me entirely within the perimeter of this desert polyhedron. But Imperial County’s attributes overwash its borders on every side, as if they were squint-wrinkles extending like sun-rays from its inhabitants’ eyes. Spillovers are easy from a place where everything is long and low, even the mountains...let’s therefore call Imperial County the center of the world...Having thus recognized its rightful place (meaning no disrespect to any other place), let’s illuminate it with all the resources of eyesight, persuasion, bribery, book-study... (45)

In light of Vollmann’s description of his project, and of the mass of material that it comprises, one way of approaching *Imperial* is to not consider it as a narrative text, but rather, as a database. Media theorist Lev Manovich defines the two forms:

As a cultural form, database represents the world as a list of items, and it refuses to order this list. In contrast, a narrative creates a cause-and-effect trajectory of seemingly unordered items (events).<sup>99</sup>

Although Vollmann includes narrative events in *Imperial* they function not in the service of an overarching story, but rather, in the service of bolstering the encyclopedic record. As Vollmann states, “no documentary caption can possibly contain overmany facts to please me” (42). I argue that his “spillover” delineations, collected encyclopedically, recursively, and repetitively, function to destabilize the continuity of grand narrative and the rationality of territorial cartography. More pointedly, I contend that Vollmann’s transborder information-

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<sup>99</sup> Manovich, “Database,” 44.

gathering is a response to the escalating informatic regime of the U.S.-Mexico security hyperborder. The proliferation of new lines and fences is episodically narrativized in *Imperial*, but also asserted structurally through a recursive series of vignettes and data-dumps called “Drawing the Line,” “The Second Line,” “The Third Line,” “The Line Itself (1895-1926),” “The Line Itself (1927-1950),” “The Line Itself: Japanese Addendum (1941-1945),” “The Line Itself (1950-2006),” “The Line Itself (2003-2006),” and “Between the Lines (2003-2005).”

My analysis of Vollmann’s text remains brief. Nevertheless, the encyclopedic nature of his text has already asserted itself upon this chapter, as I have cited him as a journalistic/historical source above, as well as included him as auteur worthy of examination here. My nonlinear reading of his text has also provided me with numerous research trails. In fact, the difficulty of coherently experiencing his text led me to thinking in terms of data structures and the hyperborder. Now the difficulty of coherently explaining his text leads me back to the questions of agency, and to fencing as a technique that “produces a subject” that “claims mastery” over the fence and the “[political operation] associated with it.”<sup>100</sup> Vollmann’s agency as an encyclopedic, white male writer, who can pass freely through the fence along the corridors of control—“a journey accomplished in about ten minutes thanks to my United States passport”<sup>101</sup>—who can casually photograph Mexican subjects with an antique camera using the fence as a frame—“gathered up the tripod and eight by ten camera, and took a portrait of Christofer through the rusty bars where we had arranged a meeting”<sup>102</sup>—and who can do all of the above in his authorial search for information, is certainly a problematic underlying all of the other problematics of Vollmann’s project.

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<sup>100</sup> Vismann, “Cultural Techniques,” 84.

<sup>101</sup> Vollmann, *Imperial*, 39.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.



Vollmann's work shows that as the fence produces subjects, so does the book. *Imperial* provokes the question of how those subjects overlap.

### **VIII. Conclusion: Contemplations**

"I hope there won't be a fence here much longer," First Lady Pat Nixon stated in August of 1971, as she dedicated Friendship Park at the site of the westernmost border marker, where the U.S.-Mexico border crosses Monument Mesa and extends into the Pacific Ocean. Forty-three years later I am working in Friendship Park on a Saturday in November with my partner Katie and two other volunteers. We are weeding and cleaning trash out of the Binational Friendship Garden of Native Plants. Dan Watman, the organizer of Friends of Friendship Park, and the chief caretaker of the garden, is, in a manner of speaking, our executive. Over the last five years he has helped to plant all of the plants on both sides of the border, including salvia, strawberries, and a secret cherry tree that could, someday, overwhelm the Border Patrol's mandated height restrictions.

Despite Pat Nixon's hope, Friendship Park has become, to use a seasonable cliché, the ground zero of border fencing on the U.S.-Mexico border. Where, in a sovereign moment, Nixon once cut and crossed through barbed wire to stand amid a crowd of Mexican citizens, there is now a 20-foot tall steel bollard fence that follows the borderline west into the ocean, and east toward the San Ysidro crossing, where it mingles with extant slabs of rusty landing mat installed 20 years ago. In all, Friendship Park is framed by two fences: The bollard fence sits alongside the line, and a second layer of bollard fencing sits some thirty yards further north. However, the first bollard fence is itself bifurcated in that a large portion of it, in the area where people can most directly mingle, is sheathed in a high gauge wire mesh that prohibits the passage of objects, and that blurs and distorts the view across the line.

In some sense, the entire security state can be symbolized with the metonym of this industrial filter that determines both the visual and haptic status of the other, and that decenters U.S. and Mexican citizens onto a simple medium.

The mesh is only one filter, one method of processing amid the hyperborder surrounding Friendship Park. Cameras stare down from above the second fence, furthering the prison atmosphere of the enclosure around Friendship Park. The Border Patrol monitors the area by truck, ATV, and helicopter; they open Friendship Park for 4 hours on Saturday, and 4 hours on Sunday. They are generally pleasant folks, but if they don't want to let volunteers into the garden, they do not have to. One agent once allowed me into the garden with a curt reminder that there were cameras everywhere. Her supervisors, she said, would be watching both her and me. For over half a year, I have literally been doing fieldwork at the site—that is to say, working in the binational garden—and in that time, I've seen two shift changes among the officers assigned to the park. The government makes the officers' lives hyper as well, by moving them from post to post along the entire length of the border, in varying shifts.

The fence divides two localities: the Playas neighborhood of Tijuana, and Border Field State Park, south of San Diego. On the Mexican side of the fence, our fieldwork is different. We can, for one thing, work directly against the fence, lean on it, even stick our hand through it. The bollards of the fence are marked with painted messages, graffiti, and murals. One Saturday, in October of 2014, a group of children arrived on a field trip. Gathered in groups along the fence, the children were given tasks by their teachers; they began to write messages on post-it notes and affix them to the fence. Pausing our gardening,

we watched them scribble, scrawl, and search for a spot to make their marks on the fence. “Di no al amor con fronteras,” one note said. “¡No Separan a las Familias!” said another.

The term often used for this fortified, securitized border is *dystopia*. Contemplating the site, however, I would amend the description to Foucault’s *heterotopia*. Friendship Park—contained by hyper layers of fencing; delimited to 8 hours of weekend access on the U.S. side, but unlimited access on the Mexican side; mediating the affections of separated friends and families through high-gauge industrial mesh—would seem to exemplify Foucault’s criteria for such a “counter-site... in which...all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted.”<sup>103</sup>

On the Mexican side of the fence, there is a recently built lighthouse, known simply as El Faro. It symbolizes past maritime economies and provides a focal point above the layers of fencing. If, as Foucault says, the “ship is the heterotopia *par excellence*,” then perhaps the lighthouse was the signal that proved the ship’s otherness, its alterity, by warning it not to come too close. “The ship, Foucault contends, has been, “for our civilization...the great instrument of economic development.” He admonishes that, “without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and the police take the place of pirates.”<sup>104</sup>

Boats remain, but perhaps the fence is the new heterotopia.

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<sup>103</sup> Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” 231.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 236.

## Chapter Four

### Vital Signs: Mediating and Regulating Wild Life in the Borderlands

#### I. Introduction: Marking Biopolitical Boundaries

From its very outset, the U.S.-Mexico borderlands were secured through a biopolitical hyperborder of cartographic, biological, and commercial media. In this chapter I examine these biopolitical border technologies. While past chapters have addressed biopolitics as a context for cartographic boundaries and for infrastructural partitioning, this chapter is explicitly focused on state, commercial, and academic media that strategically delineate and enforce distinctions in the categories of species and race. Michel Foucault dates the origin of biopower, as a “technology of power,” to the 19th century, and concisely defines it as “state control of the biological.”<sup>1</sup> As an expanded definition, Foucault defines biopolitics as a technology for

control over relations between the human race, or human beings insofar as they are a species, insofar as they are living beings, and their environment, the milieu in which they live. This includes the direct effects of the geographical, climatic, or hydrographic environment.<sup>2</sup>

Grounded in Foucault’s theory, as well as that of animal studies theorist Nicole Shukin, this chapter will closely interrogate the symbolic figures of the horse and the Indian as they have been classified by a biopolitical hyperborder. I am assembling this hyperborder from three types of media. First, I am reading the 1857 *Report of the United States and Mexican Boundary Survey* by the U.S. surveyor William H. Emory, in order to parse the symbolic categories—like race and species divides—that were used by the U.S. to justify regulation

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<sup>1</sup> Foucault, “*Society*”, 240.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

strategies like assimilation and extermination. Following on my reading of Emory, I will examine Robert Cunningham Graham's 1899 short story "A Hegira: A Story of the Apache Indians," and analyze the violent historical narrativization of "the Apaches" as limit cases for the human species that served to bind citizens of Mexico and the United States into cohesive populations. From there, I will examine the ambivalent historical figure of the horse through historiography and historical cartography. I will show that the normativization of the horse is a function of security policies—like extermination—applied to the body of the horse, and of knowledge work that renders the horse as a symbol of both wildness and domestication. The figures of the horse and the Indian are appropriative and repressive symbols of the biopolitical hyperborder that have served for over a century and half to regulate the domains of the human and the non-human animal in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands.

## **II. "Correct Knowledge," "Loose Animals," "Proper Police"**

Biopolitical media, for Foucault, include "forecasts, statistical estimates, and overall measures," which work to "achieve overall states of equilibration or regularity [in the] biological processes of man-as-species."<sup>3</sup> In the context of the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, a media object such as Emory's 1857 boundary survey functions as a prototypical biopolitical text, in that, beyond documenting the "running and marking [of] the boundary line under the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo," it also presents the results of

an examination of the country contiguous to the line to ascertain its practicability for a railway route to the Pacific; and also...information...collected in reference to the agricultural and mineral resources, and such other subjects as would give a correct

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 246.

knowledge of the physical character of the country and its present occupants.<sup>4</sup> In its imperatives, Emory's report resembles preexisting media, such as the naturalistic and ethnographic journals of explorers like Alexander von Humboldt and Prince Maximilian of Wied-Neuwied.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, in extolling the thoroughness of his process, Emory references the "grave errors" of his predecessor, "Baron Humboldt." However, while the travel writings of explorers like Humboldt and Wied furnished a generic diagram for Emory's work, the projects differ in their relations to state power. Humboldt's travels in Spanish America had been carried out with the permission of the King of Spain, Charles IV, but Humboldt financed his journeys with his own substantial inherited fortune. As private, but state-sanctioned, expeditions of scientific enterprise, Humboldt's explorations instituted an "ideological reinvention of South America" in popular European discourse through their documentation in the early 19th century.<sup>6</sup>

Emory's project, and the media it engendered, followed different predicates. The complicated set of tasks mandated for the boundary survey team by the U.S. government indicates that Emory's team, although using methods established by gentlemen explorers like Humboldt and Wied, was not acting to "impact...the public imaginations of Europe and Euroamerica"<sup>7</sup> but rather, in the words of Foucault, to "plan a milieu in terms of events or series of events or possible elements, of series that will have to be regulated within a multivalent and transformable framework."<sup>8</sup> Emory was a paid government bureaucrat managing a team of scientists and soldiers in the task of governmentalizing a territory obtained through conquest and diplomatic cession. The simultaneous objectives of the border

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<sup>4</sup> Emory, *Report*, xiii.

<sup>5</sup> Humboldt traveled in the Americas from 1799 until 1804; Wied, Humboldt's mentee, traveled in Brazil from 1815 to 1817, and across North America from 1832 until 1834.

<sup>6</sup> Pratt, *Imperial*, 111.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>8</sup> Foucault, *Security*, 245.

survey—marking the boundary line; ascertaining the possibility of a railway route; collecting information on “agricultural and mineral resources;” recording impressions of the landscape and its “present occupants”—all indicate that establishing the border was a biological as much as a territorial endeavor. In the rubric of Manifest Destiny, citizens of the United States proleptically populated the West; the task of Emory and his team was to regularize the region for commerce and settlement. This meant codifying not only the binational boundary, but also drawing lines for the railroad, distinguishing arable from barren land, circumscribing sites for mining, and overall, classifying the region’s “present occupants” relative to its future occupants. From its very outset, the U.S.-Mexico border was a hyperborder of cartographic, biological, and commercial delineations.

In considering the meaning of “occupants” in the context of Emory’s survey, I want to use the work of Shukin to expand upon Foucault’s definition of the *bio* in biopower. Shukin argues that, as limned by Foucault, biopolitics “bumps up against its own internal limit at the species line.”<sup>9</sup> If biopolitics is a technology of power that “is applied...to man-as-living-being...to man-as-species...a global mass,”<sup>10</sup> then it must, in Shukin’s analysis, be seen as a technology that depends first on “a species line occluded and at the same time inadvertently revealed” by the internal gradations of “man-as-species.” This is to say that biopolitics, as a technology for controlling human masses, is likewise founded upon techniques for delimiting animal populations; having internalized those techniques, it employs those them strategically for governance. For Shukin, these operations are not absolute, but contingent, in that “discourses and technologies of biopower hinge on the zoo-ontological production of species difference as a strategically ambivalent rather than absolute

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<sup>9</sup> Shukin, *Animal Capital*, 11.

<sup>10</sup> Foucault, “*Society*”, 242.

line, allowing for the contradictory power to both dissolve and reinscribe borders between humans and animals.” Shukin identifies these ambivalent biological lines with capitalist production, in that they are tools by which capitalism “ideologically grants and materially invests in a world in which species boundaries can be radically crossed (as well as reinscribed) in the genetic and aesthetic pursuit of new markets.”<sup>11</sup>

The use of the cryptic signifier “occupants” in Emory’s instructions opens his text, and its biopolitical imperatives, to ontological scrutiny. Although “occupants” could signify “people” occupying the country contiguous to the border, it could also signify anything that has taken up the space. In various usages throughout the survey, multiple subjects “occupy” the borderlands: The westernmost region along the border “is *occupied* by a succession of parallel ridges”; a ranch “*occupies* the left bank of the upper San Diego river”; farmland abutting the Colorado river “is *occupied* by [a] branch of the Yumas tribe”; a deceased “chief...*occupies* a large cavern in the [Sierra Prieta].”<sup>12</sup> In these four usages, four apparently distinct types of being—mountains, a constructed habitation, a living Indigenous population, and a dead Indigenous personage—*occupy* space. The signifier “occupants” flattens ontology: To gain knowledge of “occupants” is not to focus on those who “live,” or “dwell” in a given space, but rather those who “take up” that space, whether imagined as biological or geological, natural or artificial, alive or dead.

It is through this flat ontology that Emory’s report can produce the kinds of strategic differences that Shukin identifies as inherent to biopower. In its cataloging of occupation, the *Boundary Survey* engages in a textual reduction of the landscape that opens it to legibility by the State. Tasked with denoting the occupants of the region, Emory and his team are given

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<sup>11</sup> Shukin, *Animal Capital*, 11.

<sup>12</sup> Emory, *Report*, 4, 125, 129, 104 (my emphasis). In-text citations for this source follow.



the power to qualify those occupants. The semiotic choices made in the *Boundary Survey* transform occupants into “plants and animals,” and “life,” as well as “the crust of earth, the soil, and the rocks” (39). Implicated with these figurative terms, are the mathematical measurements made by Emory and his team, which are legitimized through Emory’s claim of using “forty-six inch Zenith telescopes, by Troughton & Simms, of London” (52). As the milieu is built textually, through description and information, a global mass is formed. The relations between the population and the milieu are diagrammed in terms of taxonomic distinctions—such as in the revelation that mesquite bean pods are “much relished by animals, and not wholly unsuited to the tastes of man”—or in climatic and hydrographic terms—for instance, the detail that in the alluvial soil above Brownsville “the sugar cane can be cultivated to advantage” (48, 61). Further distinctions indicate that national and commercial considerations bracket the environment: “Property,” Emory writes, “is very insecure all along the boundary, and unless extradition laws with Mexico are passed, this fertile tract will never have its capacities developed” (61).

Beyond all these demarcations are populations that cannot be accounted for completely. Emory describes a mass of feral horses “running wild” in the “fine grazing country” of southwestern Texas. In his account, the horses’ wildness is reified in their physical and social derangement:

They are usually heavy in the forehead, cat-hammed, and knock-kneed. Their habits are very peculiar; they move in squads, single file, and obey implicitly the direction of the leader. They evince much curiosity, always reconnoitring [*sic*] the camp of the traveler at full speed, and when there chances to be a loose animal, be he ever so poor and jaded, he is sure to run off with the crowd and disappear entirely.

Many a luckless horseman passing through this country has been left on foot by the “stampede” caused by the visits of these wild animals. (56-57)

What is worse for Emory, is that beyond the threat that the swarm of feral horses pose to domesticated, but “loose” animals, and to the social contract between horse and horseman, the horses represent an ongoing problem for national security:

Hunting the wild horses and cattle is the regular business of the inhabitants of Laredo [*sic*] and other towns along the [Rio Grande], and the practice adds much to the difficulty of maintaining a proper police on the frontier to guard against the depredations of Indians and the organization of filibustering parties. In times of agitation and civil war on the Mexican side, parties assemble on the American side ostensibly to hunt, but in reality to take part on one side or the other in the affairs of our neighbors. (56)

In other words, the wildness of the horses inspires a mimetic wildness in the people living in the region, as indicated by their recourse to hunting horses as game, and to using the act of hunting as a cover for engaging in transnational violence. The milieu Emory describes seems antithetical to the regularization sought through biopower, in that three otherwise domesticated populations overwrite national and biological borders and engage in contagious mixtures. However, here is where Emory’s project reveals what Shukin calls “an interimplication of representational and economics logics” by demonstrating that the material practice of biopower depends upon symbolic premises. By *representing* a site of porous borders between wild and domesticated horses, of ambivalent citizens, and of ineffective policing, Emory’s text justifies a biopolitical approach that will regulate “aleatory and

unpredictable” phenomena at the collective level.<sup>13</sup> The problem, as embedded in Emory’s description, is not feral horses, nor is it local feuds; the problem is “maintaining a proper police on the frontier to guard against the depredations of Indians and the organization of filibustering parties.”<sup>14</sup> In his depiction of a biopolitical crisis, Emory “strategically... reinscribe[s] borders between human and animals” in order to vindicate State policing of the boundary.<sup>15</sup>

By figuratively invoking wild horses as symbols of failed policing Emory’s approach makes possible Shukin’s concept of “the double entendre of rendering.”<sup>16</sup> In this rubric, Emory’s textual rendering of troubling populations will produce a contingent rendering of the “social flesh” of those populations. The stakes, ultimately, for Emory’s symbolic rendering of wild populations, are the promise of a livestock economy in which animal populations can be regulated for capital gain. Valuable land around Laredo—“fine grazing country”—underpins Emory’s vignette about the difficulty of policing the region. The figure of the wild horse, strategically invoked to justify border security, is also being invoked to justify pastoral governance that regulates livestock and human existence through a market economy.

Emory symbolically renders horses and livestock as wild to justify their future rendering as animal materials in a resource economy. Likewise, he also renders the figures of Indians as predators requiring policing. While asserting that wild horse populations and Indian populations collude in their destabilization of boundaries, Emory’s symbolic rendering of the two populations anticipates their constituent material outcomes. In speculating upon the future regulation of the region, Emory theorizes that Indians represent a

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<sup>13</sup> Foucault, *Society*, 246.

<sup>14</sup> Emory, *Report*, 56.

<sup>15</sup> Shukin, *Animal Capital*, 11.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

limit for biopower. His solution to the problematic of Indian populations for securing national boundaries epitomizes what Foucault describes as the intervention of racism as “the basic mechanism of power [of] modern States”.<sup>17</sup>

After studying the character and habits of that class of Indians called wild Indians, and bearing in mind the mild and humane government extended over them by the missionaries of the Church of Rome, without producing any results, I have come to the deliberate conclusion that civilization must consent to halt when in view of the Indian camp, or the wild Indians must be exterminated.<sup>18</sup>

Here Emory shows that the “fragmenting the field of the biological” that lays the groundwork for U.S. control of the West extends to subdividing the human species into the “subspecies known as races.”<sup>19</sup> Just as he makes a distinction between wild and domesticated horses, Emory also separates “wild” from “semi-civilized” Indians. He explicitly evokes the mechanism of race to mark this difference:

There are distinct races among the Indians as among the white men, and before the advent of Christianity they were divided into semi-civilized and wild races. The semi-civilized then, as now, cultivated the soil, lived in houses, some three stories high, and kept faith with each other, and it is among these that Christianity has made any permanent impression. The wild Indians were then, as they are now, at perpetual war with them, leading a nomadic life, defying all restraint, and faithless in the performance of their promises.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Foucault, *Society*, 254.

<sup>18</sup> Emory, *Report*, 64.

<sup>19</sup> Foucault, *Society*, 254.

<sup>20</sup> Emory, *Report*, 65.

Despite the *Boundary Survey*'s extensive categorization of Indian populations by tribal names—among others, it provides ethnographies and anecdotes of Apaches, Areñenos, Comanches, Kioways [*sic*], Lipans, Papagos, Pimos [*sic*], and Yumas—Emory's basic knowledge framework for Indian populations is not cultural or geographical, but racial. He does not state in the above polemic which cultural groups he believes occupy which place in the "hierarchy" of "good" and "inferior," but strategically "treat[s] [the Indian] population as a mixture of races" into which cultural groups can be ambivalently placed.<sup>21</sup> For instance, this framework allows for the production of categories separating "tame Apache Indians" (who live in Tucson alongside "Mexican troops and their families") from "the wild Apache [who] lords it over this region."<sup>22</sup> These contingent categories provide a flexible taxonomy through which government can pursue a policy of extermination with the predicate of "improv[ing] life"<sup>23</sup> for domesticated populations. Indeed, Emory leverages the "authorities of the United States" on behalf of "a confederacy of semi-civilized Indians, the Pimos [*sic*] and Coco Maricopas," whose "advanced state of civilization...proficiency in agriculture and the art of war, and...morality," Emory has "eulogized" on multiple occasions. "They have always been kind and hospitable to emigrants passing from the old United States to California" Emory attests, adding, "They have undoubtedly a just claim to their lands, and if dispossessed will make a war on the frontier of a very serious character." In identifying potential dispossessors of the "Pimos [*sic*] and Coco Maricopas," Emory does not name the Mexican government, from whom the Pimas (Akimel O'odham) and Maricopas had obtained title to their ancestral lands, nor the United States, to whom Mexico was ceding the territory. Rather, it is the "savage Apaches" against whom Emory urges the Pimas and Maricopas to defend their

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<sup>21</sup> Foucault, *Society*, 255.

<sup>22</sup> Emory, *Report*, 118.

<sup>23</sup> Foucault, *Society*, 254.

territory, with the promise that the United States will “come into the ceded territory” and guarantee them “all the rights that they possessed under Mexico.”<sup>24</sup>

To cite the paternalism of Emory’s rhetoric is not to deny the Pimas and Maricopas their diplomatic agency, but rather to reinforce that as a text meant to “give correct knowledge” of the occupants of the ceded territories, the *Boundary Survey* rendered borders between species and races with a strategic ambivalence. In calling on “all good American citizens to respect the authority of [Capt. Antonio Azul, head chief of the Pimos *[sic]*] and his chiefs,” Emory is also urging them to respect a calculated racial boundary between “semi-civilized” and “wild” Indians, and thus to legitimize “defending the territory against the savage Apaches.”<sup>25</sup> In this rubric, State racism is employed in order to “increase the risk of death” for “wild” Indians so that “semi-civilized” Indians may live. This inaugurates a regulation of the borderlands in which the State sanctions “not...simply murder as such, but also every form of indirect murder” of “wild” Indians, including, “political death, expulsion, rejection, and so on.”<sup>26</sup> In action, the increased risk of death for “wild” Indians included vigilante murder, massacre, and military conquest, as well as a “collapse of their subsistence systems and [an] integration into world markets” that led to resistance, death, and, ultimately, as historian Richard White has argued, relations of dependency with the U.S. government.<sup>27</sup> In the decades after Emory’s entreaties, the ambivalence of his distinctions became clear, as the “semi-civilized” Akimels and Maricopas “went from being prosperous farmers and businessmen to working as dependent laborers for Anglo American settlers.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Emory, *Report*, 95-96.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Foucault, *Society*, 256.

<sup>27</sup> White, *Roots*, xix.

<sup>28</sup> Booth, “Akimel O’odham (Pima),” 11.

By beginning with an analysis of Emory's 1857 *Report of the United States and Mexican Boundary Survey*, I have endeavored to summarize what could be called, in Foucauldian terms, the 19th-century "birth of biopolitics" in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. As shown in Emory's text, the production of the boundary line itself was implicated with the production of scientific and social demarcations that determined the "occupants" of the region along strategically ambivalent lines of species and race. These determinations anticipated governmental management of citizen populations that would be engaged in the commercial pursuits of mining and agriculture, with this commerce continentally linked through the mechanized communication of the railway. As theorized by Shukin, regimes of biopower regulate populations by managing separate "metaphorical and material" economies that threaten to "ignite" into "social antagonism" should they "brush up too closely against one another."<sup>29</sup> In what follows, I will further examine the hyperborder of biopolitics, where these metaphorical and material economies, as outlined by Shukin, collide. In the pages of Emory's report, biopolitical borders are diagrammed in the tropes of the wild horse and the wild Indian. As metaphors for uncontrollable populations, these figures represent limit cases for governmental regulation. As the metaphorical liminality of these populations is made material through force, their death mediates the biological boundaries of governance. The biopolitical boundary then, is the frontier between being "made to live" as Foucault terms the mandate of the biopolitical state, and being "let to die." As shown in borderlands history, this boundary has been enforced through what Emory called "extermination,"<sup>30</sup> otherwise euphemized as "depopulation."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Shukin, *Animal Capital*, 21.

<sup>30</sup> Emory, *Report*, 64.

<sup>31</sup> Emory, *Report*, 86; Shukin, *Animal Capital*, 219. In Emory's report, the term "depopulation" is attributed to "the excellent and reverend Bishop Leamy" (presumably the Archbishop of Santa Fe, Jean-Baptiste Lamy, who

## II. The Futility of Life in the Great Book Known as the World

In “A Hegira: A Story of the Apache Indians,” published in 1899, the Scottish laird, politician, author, and adventurer Robert Cunningham Graham downplays the landscape and lore of Mexico City in order to highlight the spectacle of “a band of Indians of the Apache tribe” shackled and guarded in a small courtyard in the castle of Chapultepec. Graham’s rhetoric, crafted for the liberal audience of London’s *Saturday Review*, presents the imprisoned Apaches as bound by the terms of the frontier dialectic of savagery and civilization. To the “half-educated” soldier guarding them, the Apaches are “‘brutes’; all sons of dogs.”<sup>32</sup> Graham’s opening narration itself shorthands the Apaches as “savages,” and, in posing them alongside particularly native flora (“The giant cypresses, tall even in the time of Montezuma”) and captured wildlife (“the tigers in their cages”), the text reduces the Apaches to a range of discursive territory concerned with wildness and pastness. Indeed, as the narrator states, in closing his meditation on the Apache prisoners, “all [the Shis-Inday (the people of the woods)] now have passed away, destroyed and swallowed up by the ‘Inday pindah lichoyi’ (the men of the white eyes).” This brief aside, which establishes the text as a historical chronicle, gives way to another reverie that complicates the historicity of the anecdotal group of Apaches. “I saw no more of the Apaches,” the narrator states,” and, except once, never met any of them; but as I left the place the thought came to my mind: if any of them succeed in getting out, I am certain that the six or seven hundred

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is later the inspiration for Willa Cather’s *Death Comes for the Archbishop*), who believes that “The wealthy State of Durango must soon be depopulated by the Indians.”

<sup>32</sup> Graham, “A Hegira,” 9.



miles between them and their country will be as nothing to them, and that their journey thither will be marked with blood.<sup>33</sup>

The temporality of “the Apaches” in Graham’s tale is rendered ambiguous by these narrative fluctuations. Introduced as a specific “band” in historical circumstances, the signifier “the Apaches” is briefly reassigned to an entire historic population, and then inserted back into the diegesis in the subjunctive mood. By simultaneously presenting the Apaches as situated actors, as historic curiosities, and as figures of potentiality, Graham constellates the varied meanings symbolized by “the Apaches” for the Mexican subjects that populate his narrative, and also, for his Anglo audience. At stake in Graham’s story is the possibility of the Apaches “getting out,” which refers to the Apaches’ narrative potential to escape from their bondage, and also addresses the ability of “the Apaches” to escape the symbolic chains that determine their precarious position in state discourse. That the Apaches’ journey to “their country” will be “marked with blood,” indicates that border crossing is simultaneously a symbolic and a material process that is documented in a biological medium. As asserted by Graham’s narrative, the Apaches’ “getting out” of the literal and figurative shackles of the Mexican state, and returning to their country, entails a marking of national symbols in vital material. The borders that the Apaches will cross will encompass their physical, even their biological existence; they will be established on their bodies and written in their blood.

Throughout the *Boundary Survey*, Emory and his lieutenants are unstinting in their condemnation of “the Apaches.” Invoked as figures of chaos, the Apaches are credited with a litany of offenses, including: “twice robb[ing] every hoof” of the Mexican Border Commission; causing “everywhere the [abandoned] remains of gold mines” by driving away

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 10-11.

the mining operators; causing the desertion of the village of Tubac, where “the timid husbandman dare not return to his home”; preventing the exploration of “rich mines of copper, silver, and gold” in the Atascosa Mountains; killing a Papago (Tohono O’odham) chief; “endeavor[ing] to stampede” the animals of the U.S. Border Commission’s Lieutenant Patterson (25, 44, 118, 119, 121, 123). While the *Boundary Survey* includes sustained ethnographies of a handful of Indian cultures, Emory summarizes the Apaches laconically:

The Apaches are usually at war with the people of both [United States and Mexico], but have friendly leagues with certain towns, where they trade and receive supplies of arms, ammunition, &c., for stolen mules.<sup>34</sup>

That the *Boundary Survey*, as a governmental record of “correct knowledge,” came to determine prevailing discourse on the Apaches is indicated by the presence of strikingly similar rhetoric in a story printed in a British literary magazine 42 years after the publishing of Emory’s report. As the narrator states in Graham’s “A Hegira”:

Five-and-twenty years ago the Apache nation, split into its chief divisions of Mescaleros, Jicarillas, Coyoteros, and Lipanes, kept a great belt of territory almost five hundred miles in length, and of about thirty miles in breadth, extending from the bend of the Rio Gila to El Paso, in a perpetual war. On both sides of the Rio Grande no man was safe; farms were deserted, cattle carried off, villages built by the Spaniards, and with substantial brick-built churches, mouldered into decay; mines were unworkable, and horses left untended for a moment were driven off in open day...<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Emory, *Report*, 86.

<sup>35</sup> Graham, “A Hegira,” 10.

This historical aside is meant to contextualize, for the reader, the imprisonment of the Apaches at Chapultepec. In describing the Apaches as a historical population, it expands upon the narrator's description of the singular presence of the Apaches in Mexico City. As the narrator recounts, the Apaches' captivity seemed to contradict the political imperatives of both the United States and Mexico:

Six warriors, a woman and a boy, captured close to Chihuahua, and sent to Mexico, the Lord knows why; for generally an Apache captured was shot at once, following the frontier rule, which without difference of race was held on both sides of the Rio Grande, that a good Indian must needs be dead.<sup>36</sup>

In citing the "frontier rule" that regardless of race, "a good Indian must needs be dead," the narrator indexes another discourse operating in the borderlands alongside the State discourse represented by Emory's report. While Emory's text establishes a strategic racial distinction between "semi-civilized" and "wild" Indians, the narrator's "frontier rule," which is not located nationally or legally, but simply regionally, condenses the taxonomy into a violent maxim. This frontier rule is presumably a corruption of the words attributed to U.S. General Phillip Sheridan. By being "remembered...and passed...on, until in time they were honed into an American aphorism" Sheridan's phrase contributed to a popular, absolute racism that complemented biopolitical strategies by shifting policing of race away from the state and toward the sovereign citizen.<sup>37</sup> In "A Hegira" the soldier who guards the Apaches exemplifies the schism between governmental and popular racism, because, "for his part he could not see why the 'Gobierno' went to the expense of keeping [the Apaches] alive."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>37</sup> Brown, *Bury My Heart*, 468.

<sup>38</sup> Graham, "A Hegira," 9. In-text citations for this source follow.

The narrator intervenes in this racist discourse by citing another source. Castigating the “folly” of the soldier, the narrator asserts the worth of “the Apaches” by declaring that, “in the great book known as the world, the savage often is the better scholar [than]...the half-educated man the whole world over” (9-10). This alternate source—“the great book known as the world”—offers a taxonomy that grades into essential categories of “savage” and “half-educated man,” and ranks these categories in terms of scholarship. The narrator laments that despite Apache acumen in the “great book known as the world,” the knowledge power gained from such a book is incommensurate with the current paradigm. The awareness of the “half-educated man” of his own power to read and write only causes him to “think that the savage who cannot do so is but a fool.” In the disagreement between discourses, the narrator gently intimates, there is an injustice: “Some [Apache] chiefs,” the narrator recounts, “showed an intelligence, knowledge of men and things, which in another sphere would certainly have raised them high in the estimation of mankind” (9-10). Although patronizing in tone, the narrator’s framework of alternate knowledges introduces an institutional skepticism into the biopolitical layering of species and race. The Apaches’ position in the hierarchy of “mankind” is due neither to inferiority, nor to wildness, but rather to the emergence of a singular, hegemonic “sphere” that does not esteem their knowledge.

Scholars of the book known as the world, the Apaches in “A Hegira” are bound to the world known through the book. This is to say, the world of Euro-American charters and maps, the world of land grants, Spanish and Mexican titles, boundary surveys, and in Graham’s case, magazine stories. It is a small feat of reflexivity that Graham’s narration accounts for its institutional position, but his metacommentary only stalls the narrative, so that the narrator, as mentioned above, can speculate upon the possibility of the Apaches

“getting out.” This speculation is itself a narrative device that guides the reader away from the book known as the world, and weaves her back into the world known through the book. The narrator, of course, knows that the Apaches will succeed in “getting out,” that “their journey will be marked with blood,” and that they “all now have passed away.” By the same token, Graham, the author, knows that “the Apaches” cannot succeed in “getting out” because there is no outside of the world known through the book unless there is, in fact, “another sphere.”

Unlike the *Boundary Survey*, which looks eagerly forward on behalf of its situated readers—among them President Franklin Pierce and Secretary of the Interior Ronald McClelland—“A Hegira” looks gravely backward at remembered events. As the exposition ends and the story begins, the narrator is immediately reduced to the position of an observer: Upon “join[ing] the mule-train...at Huehuetoca” he “[loses his] pistol in a crowd...some ‘lepero’ having abstracted it out of [his] belt” (11). Disarmed, he becomes merely a literate traveler, “stroll[ing] about the curious town [of Tula], in times gone by the Aztec capital...look[ing] at the churches, built like fortresses...stopp[ing] to talk with a knot of travelers feeding their animals” (11). His activities take on a generic character, sketched allusively for his European audience:

Grouped round a fire...the whole scene lit up and rendered Rembrandtesque by the fierce glow of an ocote torch. So talking of the Alps and the Apennines, or, more correctly, speaking of the Sierra Madre and the mysterious region known as the Bolson de Mapimi, a district in those days as little known as is the Sus to-day, a traveler drew near. (11)

Luring the reader into a reverie “rendered” with nostalgic sublimations like Rembrandt and romantic mountain ranges, the narrator gives way to a traveler who shares the “news” that the Apaches *have* succeeded in “getting out” of their captivity in Mexico City, and that the “Eight of them, six warriors, a woman and a boy, had slipped their fetters, murdered two of the guard, and were supposed to be somewhere not far from Tula” (11-12).

From here, the aura surrounding the Apaches’ anecdotal escape suffuses Graham’s story and provides its narrative momentum. What plays out in “A Hegira” can be described with two terms more closely associated with animal mobility: “homing” and “tracking.” As the narrator journeys north from the Mexican metropolis, toward the United States, the countermovement of the “homing Mescaleros” is tracked through oral media—rumors, warnings, boasts, and tales—and traced through the interpretation of “footmarks in the sand.” Graham’s narrator collates these reports and intermingles them with the his own imaginative tracking of the Apaches’ “hegira” toward their home “amongst the tribe.” In these separate trackings—anecdotal and oral, graphic, and material, and speculative and imaginary—their action of ‘getting out’ throws the Apaches’ subaltern characterization into confusion. Always already metaphors for the uncivilized other, the escaped Apaches become reinscribed by the narrator as “trotting like wolves”; cursing “after the fashion of animals”; leaving no more trace of their movements than “the passage of a fish”; “making northward, as a wild goose finds its path in spring”; and “pursu[ing] their journey like a horse let loose returning to its birthplace” (14-20). While the narrator imagines their disappearance in animal terms, the Mexican subjects in the text symbolize the threat of the Apaches through a recycled Spanish conquest discourse—in which the Apaches are “infidels” and “Moors”—and an emergent

nationalist cant—in which the oath “Viva Mexico!” is marshaled against the specter of “invasions of ‘Los Indios Bravos.’”

Another summary of the story is provided by anthropologist Michael Taussig, in his essay “Terror as Usual: Walter Benjamin’s Theory of History as State of Siege.” Mingling the textual diegesis of “A Hegira” with Graham’s biography, Taussig revises Graham’s figurative presentation as *history*, in so doing, drawing attention to the focalization process that covertly produces the world as known through the book. In Taussig’s version, Graham is the third-person protagonist and the Apaches are historical subjects who share his sphere:

In this story, “A Hegira,” Cunninghame Graham relates how on a trip to Mexico City in 1880 he visited eight Apache Indians imprisoned in a cage and on public view in the castle of Chapultepec. As he left the city to return to his ranch in Texas, he heard they had escaped, and all the long way north he witnessed elation and pandemonium as in town after town drunken men galloped off, gun in hand, to track down and kill, one by one, these foot-weary Indians—half-human, half-beast, decidedly and mysteriously Other—slowly moving north through the terrain of Mexico, constituting it as a nation and as a people in the terror of the savagery imputed to the Apache.<sup>39</sup>

Taussig’s application of Graham’s biography to his literary writing compels a closer examination of the author’s social existence within the “sphere” that he critiques. In April 1879—a little less than “five-and-twenty years” before he published “A Hegira”—Graham had traveled to Texas chasing rumors of “easy money to be made in the cattle business in the West.”<sup>40</sup> In this event, Graham, the historical personage, entered the biopolitical sphere diagrammed by Emory in the *Boundary Survey*.

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<sup>39</sup> Taussig, *Nervous System*, 14-15.

<sup>40</sup> Isbell, “Cunninghame Graham,” 503.

In 1857, Emory anticipated that a prosperous ranching economy for the rangelands of southern Texas and the Rio Grande Valley could be obtained through techniques of biopower. Claiming that, “when extradition laws are enacted and enforced, and the Indians who periodically plunder the country are exterminated, the rearing of cattle will be followed with advantage,” Emory called on the government to murder Indians so that cattle could live.<sup>41</sup> As Shukin emphasizes, it went without saying that “[bio]power’s effects [would go] beyond the production of human social and/or species life and into the zoopolitics of animal capital.”<sup>42</sup> In other words, “rearing cattle with advantage” actually meant producing enough cattle to make a profit; Indians would be exterminated so that massive populations of cattle could be reared for capital enterprise.

In 1879, as part of a wave of Scottish and British investment in the western cattle business, Graham and his wife Gabriela went in search of this animal capital. In so doing, Graham implicated himself in the ongoing extermination of Indians in the borderlands, but he did not do so successfully, in that he “failed at almost every turn in his efforts to establish himself in the cattle business,” further failed at exporting cotton to Mexico, and finally secured a ranch northwest of San Antonio only to have his horses stolen and his livestock burned to the ground, apparently, “by Indians.”<sup>43</sup> After supporting themselves at odd jobs—Robert as a cowboy and horse-breaker, Gabriela as a teacher in New Orleans—the Grahams returned to their ancestral estate in Scotland, secured Graham’s inheritance, and took on family debts. Graham became the first socialist member of Parliament in 1886. Selling their estate in 1900, the Grahams lived in comfort for the rest of their lives. By that time, as evidenced by the publication of “A Hegira” and numerous other stories, prefaces, and books,

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<sup>41</sup> Emory, *Report*, 64.

<sup>42</sup> Shukin, *Animal Capital*, 11.

<sup>43</sup> Isbell, “Cunninghame Graham,” 505.



Graham had become a literary aristocrat; a friend of George Bernard Shaw, G.K. Chesterton, and Oscar Wilde, among others, he was also, most importantly for literary scholars, a mentor to Joseph Conrad.

This snapshot of his deeply privileged, adventurous, and influential life is meant to illustrate that for a landed gentleman expatriate like Graham, not just the cattle, but all the trappings of the West were capital, in the Bourdieuan sense of symbolic capital. Graham's adventures in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands, as well as in South America and Africa, sustained his fame and fortune through their investment into social, political, and literary media. Alternately regarded as an influential critic of "the evils of colonialism, capitalism and imperialism," and as an aristocratic tourist and "Gauchó Apologist,"<sup>44</sup> Graham's work cannot be separated from its performance of what Mary Louise Pratt calls "anti-conquest," which are the "strategies of representation...European bourgeois subjects [like Graham use] to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony." The narrator in "A Hegira" is a quintessential "'seeing-man'...whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess" (and in this case, he is rendered conspicuously passive through the narrative loss of his pistol).<sup>45</sup> Taussig's identification of Cunninghame Graham with this narrator is an important re-marking of Graham's text that acknowledges the capital Graham claimed through his depiction of Indian murder. Rather than a passive nameless observer, Graham is at the top of the hierarchy in the biopolitical sphere, a global figure eagerly producing the world as known through the book.

By historicizing Graham as the narrator, Taussig effaces the boundaries of Graham's tale, and reinscribes the violence that Graham depicts into the historical record. By shifting

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<sup>44</sup> Walker, "Cunninghame Graham," 111, 108.

<sup>45</sup> Pratt, *Imperial*, 7.

“A Hegira” from literary to historical discourse, Taussig forces the reader to consider the material consequences underlying Graham’s symbolic violence. In his own work, Taussig mobilizes Graham’s story to summarize the institutionalized terror that overwhelmed Indians biologically in the 19th century, and that “constituted Mexico [and the United States] as [nations and peoples]” through the symbolic capital of that terror. Graham’s story, Taussig’s vignette asserts, redirects itself away from the historical in order to gain literary capital; a revisionist reading must be performed to restore the historic violence that is already there.

Without being too generous, I want to propose that Graham also invites a nonliterary reading of the work by proposing the framework of the “great book known as the world,” for which his text cannot account, except to imply that it is experienced through scholarship, and that it may consist of “knowledge of men and things.” This alternate text, which cannot be read *through* the symbolic medium of “A Hegira,” remains beyond the reach of the narrative, and recedes into the ciphers that describe it without defining it. As Graham’s narrative emphasizes, Apache scholarship in the great book known as the world is a devalued discourse that is delimited by the epithet “wild,” a discourse that Graham cannot imagine without recourse to a phantasmagoria of animal symbols, and a discourse that is capitalized upon by the State to foment terror among its citizens. “A Hegira” likewise shows that romantic visions about the mysteries of Apache discourse blind one to the Apaches’ shared human mortality. While the sublime others in the narrator’s “minds-eye” return “after their hegira, planned with such courage ...safe [to] Indian Territory...amongst the tribe,” their bodies do not.<sup>46</sup>

In order to gauge its full critique of biopower, I argue that “A Hegira” must be read as a document of all three discourses—as a literary text, as a historical text, and as a text that

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<sup>46</sup> Graham, “A Hegira,” 22. In-text citations for this source follow

invokes nonliterate knowledge to account for morals inaccessible by writing. The story ends with the narrator and the caravan in which he is traveling arriving in northern Mexico, where they encounter a Texas rancher—a figure that Graham repeatedly failed to become in his youth—who relates to them that he lives in “‘kornkewbinage with a native gal,’ called, as he said, ‘Pastory,’” whom he will not marry because she is Catholic (22). Talking freely to Graham’s narrator and the travelers without any prompting, the Texan describes the latest events to occur on his ranch:

He told us that he had “‘had right smart of an Indian trouble here yesterday just about afternoon. Me and my ‘vaquerys’ were around looking for an estray horse, just six of us, when close to the ranch we popped kermash right upon three red devils, and opened fire at once. I hed a Winchester, and at the first fire tumbled the buck; he fell right in his tracks, and jest as I was taking off his scalp, I’m doggoned if the squaw and the young devil didn’t come at us jest like grizzly bars. Wal, yes, killed ‘em, o’ course, and anyhow the young ‘un would have growed up; but the squaw I’m sort of sorry about. I never could bear to kill a squaw, though I’ve often seen it done.” (22)

With this candid, vernacular figure of murderous frontier racism, Graham demonstrates how the biopolitical mandate of “letting die” functions through the technique of displacing State murder into the purview of the vigilante sovereign citizen. “Indian trouble,” as a code, connotes the non-citizen Apaches as chronic and yet random threats—in Foucauldian terms, “aleatory” problems—that all citizens are deputized to efface. “Indian trouble” is a viral enemy that the Texan casually assumes he shares with the narrator. Indeed, the continuous massacre of the Apaches by Mexican citizenry throughout the journey has already proven the continuity of the Texan’s actions with the fears of a binational populace. And yet, in his

literary asides, and through his narrative “minds-eye,” Graham has also already expressed a sardonic and somber commiseration, in addition to an anxious sense of romance, for the Apaches. In its construction, “A Hegira” deliberately refines the stakes for the reader until the Apaches have become neither savage, nor wild, but rather a sympathetic symbol of the biological imperative. By the time they meet their death at the hands of the Texan, the Apaches have been reduced by murder to only three individuals—the allegorical family unit of man, woman, and child, in addition to a small white dog that follows them. This primal scene sublimates the Texan’s solution to “Indian trouble” into a system of mass murder—that is to say, genocide—that the Texan feels compelled to explain. In this ethic of extermination, killing the Apache man is a symbolic display of power capitalized through scalping, killing the child is meant to stem the growth of the population, and killing the Apache woman, being “sort of” dishonorable and/or distasteful, is a contingency given the circumstances. Amid the casualness of these observations, Graham’s narrator attempts no further dialogue. The travelers visit the grave, where Pastory, the Texan’s companion, is attempting to catch the dog that she has convinced the Texan, in his petty sovereignty, to let live. Forced to spend the night at the “accursed” ranch, the narrator and company travel on the next day.

In its narrative closure, with its violent climax occurring dialogically, and leaving little time for denouement, “A Hegira” veers toward the horror genre. The last symbol, on the periphery of the “accursed” ranch, is the “fresh-turned-up earth which marked the Indians’ grave” (24). While the narrator departs the scene on horseback, frantically moralizing “on all kinds of things; upon tenacity of purpose, the futility of life, and the inexorable fate which mocks mankind, making all effort useless, whilst still urging us to strive,” the last word—or the last scratching and howling—is given to a non-literate, non-

human scholar of the great book known as the world who “squat[s] dejectedly” on the Indian’s grave (23-24). In his horrified inability to moralize the material history of Indian extermination, Graham literally turns to the nonhuman to provide the moral to the story.

### **III. Of Wild and Epic Designs**

Missing from Taussig’s summary of “A Hegira,” perhaps because it is barely reflected upon by the narrator, is the case of the Apaches who got away. In a brief event, beyond the scope of the story, the travelers hear tell that, “in the night the homing Mescaleros had stolen a horse, and two of them mounting upon him had ridden off, leaving the rest of the forlorn and miserable band behind” (13). These refugees on horseback escape the rendering process faced by their compatriots, in that they are neither marked for death, nor commemorated by Graham. Riding away from the book, they cross into an economic sphere for which neither literary nor historical narratives fully account.

In capitalizing upon a horse, the unbound Apaches reproduce the genesis of what historian Jack Forbes (Powhatan-Renape/Delaware-Lenape) called “one of the most significant phenomena of post-Columbian American Indian history,” namely, “the spread of horses and mules and the appearance of mounted Indians.”<sup>47</sup> By Forbes’ writing, in 1959, most theories about the “problem of the spread of the horse,”<sup>48</sup> focused upon “the precise dates at which the successive tribes came into its possession,” as historian Francis Haines termed it, or upon the “place of origin of the original stock.”<sup>49</sup> Horse histories were narratives of appearance and encounter in which a deeply speculative act of historical imagination would foreground a rigorous documentary quest. The initial event by which Indians—any

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<sup>47</sup> Forbes, “The Appearance,” 189.

<sup>48</sup> Wissler, “The Influence,” 1.

<sup>49</sup> Haines, “Where,” 112.

Indians—obtained horses would have to be conjectured and studied logically and imaginatively, while the separate tribal encounters would be tallied in the historical record and extrapolated into chronology. The problem of the spread of the horse demonstrates the aporia surrounding the historicization of nonhuman animals: The nonhuman animal does not alone make history in the medium of letters. Among other “technique[s]...addressed to the milieu,” biopower is applied this problem.

For Haines, in 1938, logic disputed the prevailing theory that “animals lost or abandoned by the De Soto and Coronado expeditions in the period 1540-1542 probably furnished the parent stock” of horses for Indian cultures.<sup>50</sup> Opining that for Indians who encountered it, “the stray [horse] would have suggested a dinner rather than a servant,” Haines proposed that the initial acts of horse acquisition by Indian peoples occurred through disciplinary colonial environments, like mission farming or pastoral servitude.<sup>51</sup> A colonial rubric of domestication tied instrumentalized horses to instrumentalized people; Indians obtained horses, Haines argued, when a missionized “herdsman [made] his escape with some of the horses entrusted to his care,” thereby rendering to any “wild tribe [that encountered him, both] horses and someone to teach them how to use the new servants.”<sup>52</sup> On this matter, Forbes concedes that Haines’ origin story “must in general be accepted.”<sup>53</sup>

A daring escape across cultural and geographical borders, strangers with radical technology, cultural transformation—such is the stuff of epics. Indeed, as historian Pekka Hämäläinen asserts, “After more than a century of intense academic scrutiny and popular fascination the history of Plains Indians and horses has become a quintessential American

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Haines, “Northward,” 429.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 431.

<sup>53</sup> Forbes, “The Appearance,” 189.

epic.”<sup>54</sup> Hämäläinen’s 2003 appraisal of the field intervenes in what has become “a sweeping story of cultural collision and fusion” and a “straightforward success story” whereby horses spread northward from the Spanish southwest repeatedly creating a frontier of fresh possibility, opening for each tribe in its path a new era of unforeseen wealth, power, and security.” This pioneer narrative with horses as its heroes persists, Hämäläinen argues, “because it makes for a compelling and fundamentally uplifting story that is easy to incorporate into historical overviews and textbooks.”<sup>55</sup> In other words, horses have been historicized in fundamentally anthropomorphic—and particularly patriarchal/patriotic—frameworks that capitalize upon them as symbols of freedom and mobility.

As Hämäläinen attests, redress to this story emerges through the rubric of environmental histories that decenter human agency, and through borderlands turns that “resist narrative closure,” but while new histories change the narrative, they do not supersede narrative form. If the spread of horses is not an epic, then perhaps it is a collection of “mostly small-scale tales,”<sup>56</sup> or, perhaps, more productively, what Hämäläinen and Samuel Truett call “entanglements of epic and romance.”<sup>57</sup> Or, to return to “A Hegira,” perhaps the horse and its conspirators escape narrative discourse entirely into the great book known as the world, leaving only a thread with which to embroider history. Or, perhaps horses’ lives can only be formed into what Hämäläinen calls “patterns,” which become qualified with terms like “success and failure,” “movement,” and “labor.”<sup>58</sup>

For Emory in 1857, the threat of the horse as an unregulated set of possibilities was literally unsettling. Likewise, for horse historians of the early to mid 20th century—though

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<sup>54</sup> Hämäläinen, “Rise and Fall,” 833.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Hämäläinen and Truett, “On Borderlands,” 338.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 361.

<sup>58</sup> Hämäläinen, “Rise and Fall,” 834, 841, 850.

with less ruthlessness—horses as fugitive patterns meant a frustrating lack in history. In both cases, the goal was—in Foucauldian terms—to normalize the horse. In Emory’s section of the biopolitical sphere, that meant extermination at the hands of “the entire white race.”<sup>59</sup> In the late nineteenth century, herds of mustangs were “shot on sight,” “captured, killed, or run out,” “hunted as wild game,” and “shipped to livestock markets.”<sup>60</sup> Historian Walker D. Wyman states that, at this time, “the only friend the horse had was the Indian,” but on this front, horses became targets for biological warfare. For instance, after the 1874 surrender of the Comanches, Kiowas, and Cheyennes, the U.S. Army rounded up thousands of their horses in multiple hunts, and judging them “too expensive to feed, and too valuable to release,” slaughtered roughly 7,000 to 8,000 of them.<sup>61</sup> By the 1920s, Wyman relates—in terms that corroborate Shukin’s analysis—the “wild horse herds of the West” were being regulated by the “development of new markets.”<sup>62</sup> Biopolitical manipulation of the species divide rendered wild horses into fodder for domesticated animals considered below the realm of the human, but in its use as animal capital, horseflesh also outlined national boundaries in the human species. Wild horses became chicken feed, and canned dog and cat food in the United States; “the better cuts were shipped to Scandinavia for human consumption.”<sup>63</sup>

As industrial capitalism normalized horses into commodities in the early 20th century, so too, did historians begin to render horse histories into legible patterns. Hämäläinen mentions a century of “intense academic scrutiny” about horse economies by the year 2003, but Francis Haines relates that when he was a Ph.D. candidate under at UC Berkeley in the 1930s, he “ [failed] to find anything [in the Bancroft Library] on the spread

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<sup>59</sup> Wyman, *The Wild Horse*, 253.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 135-137.

<sup>61</sup> Quammen, “People,” 110.

<sup>62</sup> Wyman, *The Wild Horse*, 202.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 206.



of horses in the West.” Upon sharing his inability to find historical material on horse dispersion with his mentor, Herbert Bolton, he was told, “It has not been done yet. Perhaps you should do it.”<sup>64</sup> Haines’ foundational articles in *American Anthropologist* included the novel production of a “Map showing the northward spread of the horse in western United States”<sup>65</sup> [Figure 1]. This map, which uses “Lines [to] indicate the approximate routes followed by horses” and “dates [to indicate] the approximate time the horse reached each area,” combines diverse geographical and cultural instances of horse encounter into a single,

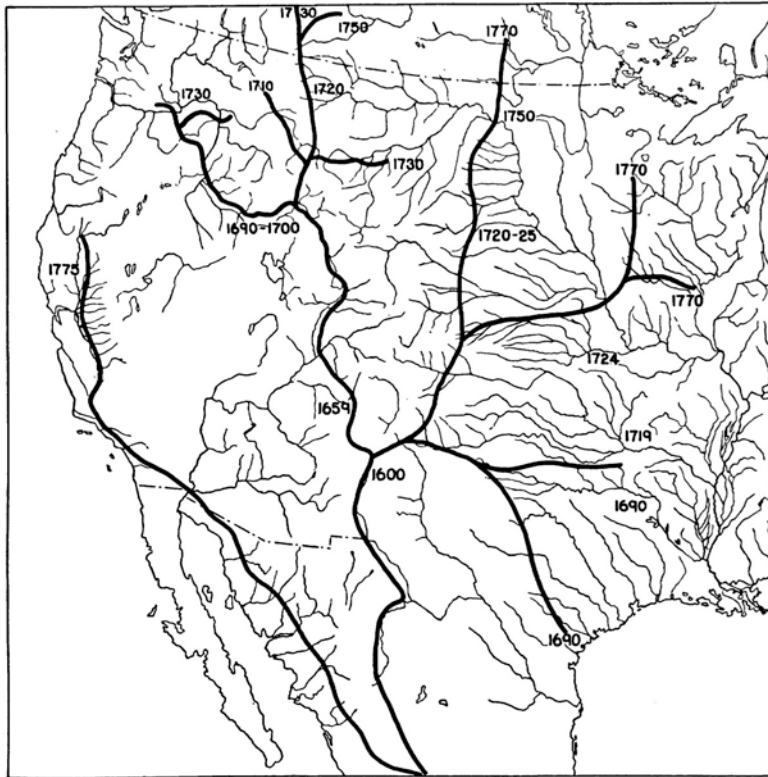


FIG. 1. Map showing the northward spread of the horse in western United States. Lines indicate the approximate routes followed by horses; the dates, the approximate time the horse reached each area.

Figure 1. Francis Haines’ map from “The Northward Spread of Horses Among Plains Indians.”

<sup>64</sup> Haines, “Go Write,” 128-129.

<sup>65</sup> Haines, “Northward,” 430.

coherent pattern that resembles cartographic renderings of road or rail systems. Vectors of North American watersheds intersect with the lines of horse dispersal, as do, with intriguing anachronism, the U.S.-Mexico and U.S.-Canada borderlines.

With his map, Haines engages in a kind of incipient historical geography, in that he uses “maps and spatial diagrams to visualize spatial processes and make visual arguments” about history.<sup>66</sup> Forbes has argued that in terms of geography, Haines’ work suffered by his use of a “limited amount of historical documentation of a secondary nature,” and in particular, by a neglect of Spanish-language and Mexican sources.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, Haines’ cartography centers his argument on the continental United States. With its reproduction of national boundaries that postdate even the latest listed date of horse arrival, the map interpellates a reader who orients by the U.S. as a fixed reference point. However, Haines’ map also addresses a historiographic problem, namely that, “the historical form—the narrative—is not very good at expressing spatial relationships.”<sup>68</sup> Haines’ map, then, is an early alternative form to the capacious narratives that would come to normalize the history of the horse. It does not present a narrative, but rather a visual design that can be interpreted narratively.

In reading Haines’ cartographic design of horse dispersal, one cannot be certain of the meaning of its shape. The lines seem to stretch to definite endpoints, to branch at specific sites, and to undulate at particular places on recognizable polygon of North America. However, the map conceals its data; although the caption claims that the lines follow “approximate routes followed by horses,” no other signs on the map indicate the logic of the routes. The accompanying prose synthesizes Haines’ historical evidence, and narrativizes

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<sup>66</sup> Knowles, “GIS,” 4.

<sup>67</sup> Forbes, “The Appearance,” 189.

<sup>68</sup> White, “Foreword,” x.

horses' appearances in particular places at particular times, but it does not justify the routes as they are rendered on the map. Haines' map normalizes the spread of the horse, ironically enough, with a somewhat irregular, perhaps even aleatory, design. It is, in short, a sketch.

Despite its general abstraction, Haines' rendering of horse dispersal became codified as objective spatial history. In 1945, seven years after Haines' article, Wyman included a veritable copy of Haines' horse design with slightly heavier, blunter lines, in his monograph *The Wild Horse of the West*. In Wyman's map [Figure 2], the U.S.-Mexico border has been subtracted (the U.S.-Canada border remains), and an artist has appended the icons of a sailing ship, a horse standing on a crag, and a sun setting off the coast of Baja California. More significant than these indexes is the drawing of a spur in the place of the compass rose, which subtly argues for human complicity in the distribution of the horse to varied locales. This

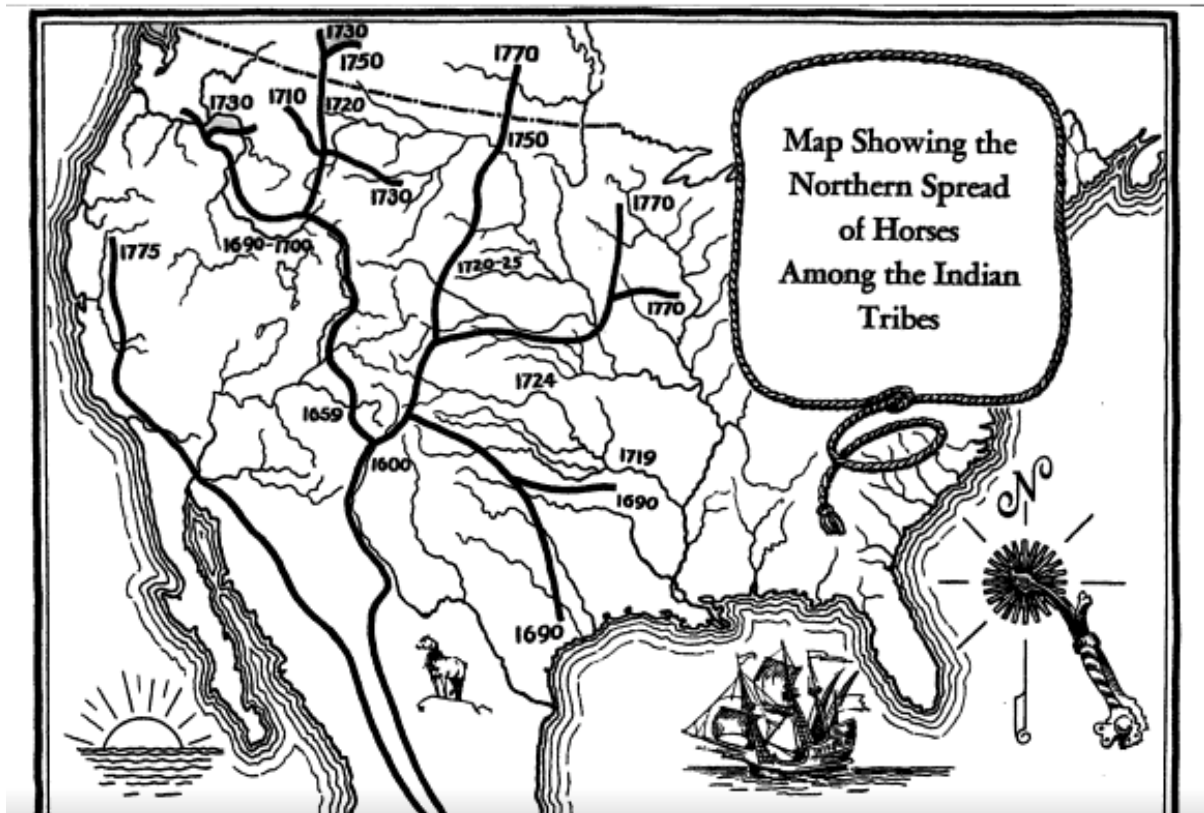


Figure 2. Walker D. Wyman's map from *The Wild Horse of the West*.

scenario, which is supported by historical narratives, and is stressed in Hämäläinen's later historiography, is not expressed in Haines' sparser cartography.

Nearly 40 years later, in 1986, Haines' design appears again, included in the folding map "Northern Plains" from the *National Geographic* series, *The Making of America* [Figure 3]. Marking "Horse arrival" in an inset map of Great Plains history from 1650-1807, Haines' design curves among a dense field of toponyms and icons. Historical commentaries contend for space on the page with signs for "Fort[s] or trading post[s]," "Site[s]," "Indian village[s]," and most importantly, "Entryway[s]," which are flow arrows indicating the entry of Euro-Americans—in this case, French Voyageurs—to the Northern Plains. *The Making of America* was a "series of 17 historical maps and accompanying articles on regions of the United States, including also the West Indies and parts of Canada and Mexico intimately meshed with our own [U.S.] history." As described by editor Wilbur E. Garrett, the project drew "upon the expanding field of historical geography," to show "historical processes," "geographic patterns," and "changing imprints of settlement."

Intended as "virtual road maps to the past," the maps of *The Making of America* elucidated U.S. history as a collage of geographical interactions, including,

the ascendancy of the Plains Indians during the 17th and 18th centuries, [which can] be linked to their mastery of Spanish horses...[and which] ultimately reshaped the region and with it the course of human events.<sup>69</sup>

National Geographic's "Northern Plains" map revised the historical terrain around Haines' design to include names of tribes present along the abstract route of the horse (e.g. "Cheyenne," "Omaha" "Nez Perce"). The map series also incorporated the "problem of the spread of the horse" into a rationalized field of pluralized, kinetic bio-cultural relations.

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<sup>69</sup> Garrett, "The Making," 630-631.



Figure 3. Inset map from “Northern Plains,” *The Making of America*, by National Geographic.

Neither a biological problem nor a historical problem anymore, the horse had definitively become an icon for “historical processes,” and an agent in making “Americans different as a people.”<sup>70</sup>

Arguably, Haines’ shaky diagram solved the historical “problem of the spread of the horse”—in much the same way that grand narratives have done—by abstracting uncertain and contested events into a generalized and repeatable symbology. In this sense Haines’ design has become a set of instructions for historiography. It has become, technically speaking, a historio-cartographic program. In the language of GIS, the term for a

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 631.

programmatic cartographic design is a *shapefile*. As a digitally encoded set of instructions that loads a predrawn cartographic visualization into a GIS rendering program, a shapefile banishes the aleatory problems of mapmaking in favor of regulated dataflow. A shapefile of Haines' design would move the history of horses to yet another side of the species divide. As digital information processed by computers, horse histories using Haines' design could arguably be written without humans. A shapefile of Haines' design would also further the biopolitical control of the horse as an object of what Emory called "correct knowledge" by further systematizing the "technological conditions of the sayable and thinkable [about the horse] in culture."<sup>71</sup> As Haines' design became more standardized, the lines of horse migration would become an informational problem and no longer a historical problem. A shapefile of Haines' design would in some ways mark an end and a new beginning for the "problem of the spread of the horse" in that it would seal up Haines' archive and move his design into a new archive where the question of its own dispersal would become problematically vitalized.

That Haines' design has in fact become a shapefile is made clear by its inclusion in the March 2014 issue of *National Geographic* [Figure 4]. Used to illustrate David Quammen's article "People of the Horse," the familiar fan of lines is reproduced across a three-dimensional projection of the Earth. A series of newly devised arrows extends the original design into the Caribbean and back toward Europe, around the globe and out of view. Another new set of arrows accounts for northern European dispersal of the horse into Eastern colonies. As a solution to the problem of the spread of the horse, the map is capacious in its imagery and definitive in its markings. In its online application, the aleatory lines that Haines sketched have become regularly—and perhaps infinitely—iterable. With a

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<sup>71</sup> Ernst, *Digital Memory*, 195.



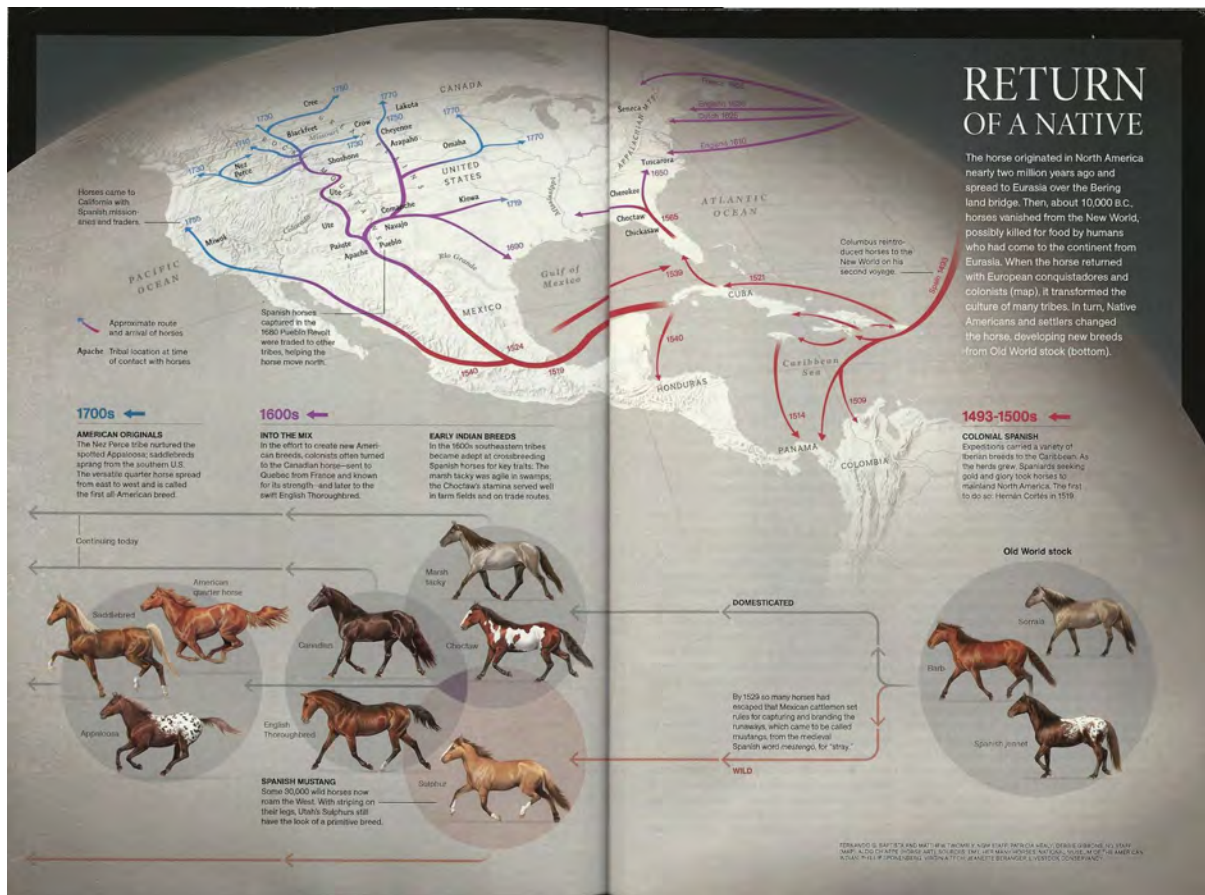


Figure 4. Map for "People of the Horse," *National Geographic*, March 2014.

click, the horse-lines flow—rendered in red, purple, and blue; through the marked centuries; over oceans and coastlines; over state-lines and river-lines; over rendered topography—to their destined tribal contacts. In their digitized streaming across digitized borders, these digitally rendered, channeled horses become a symbol for a new technological milieu. Flowing horses represent free, unbordered information.

#### IV. Conclusion

She had some horses

She had some horse she loved  
 She had some horses she hated

These were the same horses

—Joy Harjo (Mvskoke), excerpt from "She Had Some Horses," 1983

Joy Harjo's poem "She Had Some Horses" contains 50 lines and 45 "horses" running down the page, from context to context, from condition to condition, from location to location. As the poem states, "Some" of these horses "were clay and would break," some "danced in their mothers arms," some "were maps drawn of blood"; many were other things. All the horses are "who" (except for those who are "with"); none of them are "that"; and all of them are historical possessions or historical relationships that "She had." In the end, the poem declares, "These were the same horses."<sup>72</sup>

As a reflexive inscription technology, Harjo's poem problematizes regulation and muddies legible distinctions. Every poetic line contains a plurality of horses; each plurality is different from the other pluralities; despite these differences, they are "the same horses." A reader of the poem may differentiate each plurality of horses from the other by virtue of their graphical separation on the page. She may do likewise for every "She" (although the poem does not specify that each "She" is the same). A reciter of the poem, on the other hand, may differentiate each plurality of horses—and each "She"—through vocal modulations. In fact, given the lively, aleatory nature of the voice and breath, she may not be able to keep from creating vocal differences from line to line to line.

"She Had Some Horses" closes this chapter as a hopeful reproof to the normalizations discussed above. In its galloping, transforming lines it renders the biopolitical—"horses who were maps of blood," "horses who had no names," "horses who had books of names—against itself by presenting a different structure for control over relations, one in which similarity and difference are elucidated only in unexpected acts of relation, in sudden shifts in space and time, in the prism of memory. Words in Harjo's poem cannot be counted on to

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<sup>72</sup> Harjo, "She Had Some Horses," 63-64.



mark difference beyond a degree; although “She Had Some Horses” is a catalog of types, it cannot produce a biopolitical subject with control over the species divide.

As I have sought to show above, the U.S.-Mexico hyperborder begins in the attempt to police boundaries between so-called civilized and savage humans, and domestic and wild animals. As argued by Shukin, these renderings are an imbricated process of symbolic and material operations that occur narratively, cartographically, and through corporeal violence mediated onto the body. Normalization processes—extermination, assimilation, and informatization—succeed these biopolitical frontiers. To the extent that academic history, commercial literature, and informational technologies are themselves correlates of techniques of biopolitics, of a totalizing hyperborder,

Some critical resistances are necessary.  
Some critical resistances are conditional.

These are the same resistances.

## Epilogue

### Peacemaking, Friendship, and the Hyperborder

As tools that help set the record straight, we see [Zuni] maps as a means to mutual understanding and peace making; the spaces between metaphorical lines, between paintings, and between narratives are spaces for opportunity and performance. I believe these maps will lead to new understandings either by formal agreements or simple appreciation of a Zuni worldview...The rest of the world may still want their conventional maps, but to evolve as a global society we need to challenge what is conventional and legitimate. We also need to challenge standards and notions that tell us what a map should be.

—Jim Enote, “A:shiwi on A:shiwi/ Zuni on Zuni,” 2011

In Chapter Two, I used the question ‘What is a map?’ as a way to examine how borders function epistemologically, through struggles over terminology, and particularly through settler colonial denials of Indigenous media techniques and technologies. In his introduction to the book *Mapping our Places: Voices from the Indigenous Communities Mapping Initiative*, Zuni artist Jim Enote provides a detailed definition of mapping from an Indigenous perspective:

Indigenous peoples have always had maps...We’ve had songs, chants, prayers, migration stories, shell arrangements, drawings on hides, drawings on wood and stone...These maps aid our memories; they give reference to our places of origin, places we have visited, and places we hope to go. They also provide us with a reference of where we are within the universe and help us to define our relationship to natural processes surrounding us—and because they are ours they function in our own language and use scales we can relate to...But over the past 500 years we’ve been “remapped.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Enote, “Introduction,” 12.

Enote—who, in addition to being an artist, is the Executive Director of the A:shiwi A:wan Museum and Heritage Center in Zuni Pueblo—asserts that maps have been Indigenous peoples’ constant possessions. He turns the question of the map immediately to a catalog of forms, media, and materials, and in so doing, defers issues of semiotics as well as questions of authorship. Maps in Enote’s definition are records of their own differences from one another—a song is not the same as a chant, a shell arrangement, or a drawing on hide—and collectively, they perform a discrete selection of associated functions. Enote marks maps as the subjects of these functions. The maps he describes “*aid* [Indigenous] memories,” and “*give* reference to [Indigenous] places of origin.”<sup>2</sup> Enote consistently credits maps as benevolent agents; they negotiate Indigenous peoples’ locations “within the universe” and they mediate Indigenous “relationship[s] to [surrounding] natural processes.” That said, they also exist, in a manner of speaking, in proprietary relations with Indigenous users; precisely “because” they belong to Indigenous peoples, the maps that Enote describes make themselves accountable in Indigenous languages and at relatable scales.

Enote’s definition of Indigenous maps shifts what Foucault would call the map’s “system of constraint.” The author function is devalued as a limiting factor in favor of communal considerations of material and wordly relationships. In describing the maps made through the support of the Indigenous Communities Mapping Initiative, Enote describes uniquely situated dialogues as the “functional principle” by which cartographic meanings were limited, excluded, and chosen.<sup>3</sup> As Enote recounts it, the dialogue function that constrained the maps occurred in at least two systematic ways. First,

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. (my emphasis).

<sup>3</sup> Foucault, “What is an Author?,” 221.

The work of the mappers...had to come into touch with the society around them. In the process of seeking guidance from mapping advisors, who were often community elders, old place names were recalled, located, and mapped.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to these more directly advisory dialogues between mappers and knowledge-holders, the voices in the communities at large were given agency over the composition of the maps:

A tremendous amount of discussion about mapping took place within the communities, because mapping is also about deciding why a map is or isn't necessary and, if it is, what it should say and how it should say it.<sup>5</sup>

As Enote shows, the outcome of the initiative was the production of a series of “new maps and mapping processes [that] are not only empowering [but] also have the potential to serve as important peacemaking tools.” The mapping process, through which communities worked together to gather information, became “something greater” than a cartographic exercise—it became “a powerful and unifying force within communities.” Through these practices, mappers were transformed into “new tradition-bearers,” at the same time that elders were recognized as holders of beneficial communal information. Furthermore, the communal mapping process endowed the maps themselves with recognizable authority. As Enote asserts, “Indigenous maps can serve as familiar guides—almost like an aunt or uncle—to help understand messages and meanings about places before major conflicts can arise.” The eventual challenge, Enote adds, “is having these maps accepted as legitimate outside indigenous communities.”<sup>6</sup> Indigenous mappers further speculated upon the potential outcomes for Indigenous maps as they traveled outside their communities. While some

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<sup>4</sup> Enote, “Introduction,” 13.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

mappers showed concern that “maps could be used against them, or that they might be giving away something sacred,” other mappers “expressed satisfaction that with their new maps they finally have an opportunity to challenge outside claims to their territories”<sup>7</sup>

Enote’s definition of a map, written with Indigenous constituencies in mind, and supported by a range of communal voices, provides an important complement to the literary, cartographic, and infrastructural media processes examined throughout this project. By deferring the author function to a dialogue function; by describing maps as diverse material media that take subject positions in relationships with Indigenous actors; and by stressing the map and the mapping process as a field of spatial, cultural, and generational negotiation, whereby the meanings of inside and outside are debated and “peacemaking” is instrumentalized, Enote—and the communities he represents—drastically expands the meaning and the mediality of the map. At the same time, their definition grounds mapping locally and historically. Maps, Enote argues, are dialogic constructions, and they occur at places in history. With this framework in mind, it must be recognized that Indigenous communities have been enduring a five-century-long historical process of “remapping,” during which their places and their maps have been subalternized. Recognizing and discussing this historical process is, Enote shows, what could enable mapping to become an instrument for peacemaking.

In “A:shiwi on A:shiwi/ Zuni on Zuni,” his introductory essay to the museum catalog for the 2011 exhibit A:shiwi A:wan Ulohnanne—The Zuni World, Enote revises his definition of the map for a more localized context:

The Zuni have always had maps. We have maps in songs and prayers, painted on

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

ceramics, and etched in stone. Our maps aid our memories, they give reference to our places of origin, places we have visited, and places we hope to go. They also provide us with a reference of where we are within the universe and help us to define our relationship to natural processes surrounding us. And because these maps are ours, they function within our particular cultural sensibilities...But over the past 500 years we have been remapped.<sup>8</sup>

This definition of Zuni maps, map materials, and the relationships mediated by maps echoes the definition of Indigenous maps that Enote devised for the introduction to *Mapping Our Places* in 2005, with a few important changes. Although already quoted in full above, I will reproduce Enote's earlier definition here for immediate comparison:

Indigenous peoples have always had maps...We've had songs, chants, prayers, migration stories, shell arrangements, drawings on hides, drawings on wood and stone...These maps aid our memories; they give reference to our places of origin, places we have visited, and places we hope to go. They also provide us with a reference of where we are within the universe and help us to define our relationship to natural processes surrounding us—and because they are ours they function in our own language and use scales we can relate to...But over the past 500 years we've been “remapped.”<sup>9</sup>

The similarity between these two definitions is not merely a matter of updating an idea or revising syntax or punctuation. Rather, the two definitions indicate differences of time, scale, location, and context. Their counterposed texts show the transformation of an idea as it travels from local to global scales, or from perhaps from local history to a global

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<sup>8</sup> Enote, “A:shiwi,” 4.

<sup>9</sup> Enote, “Introduction,” 12.

design. In his 2005 definition, Enoté is summarizing what must be considered a global movement (despite the Indigenous Communities Mapping Initiative's funders' "geographic limitations [to] western North America and the Hawaiian Islands"). Enoté's focus in this definition is "Indigenous peoples" at large, and his list of mapping materials is capacious ("songs, chants, prayers, migration stories, shell arrangements, drawings on hides, drawings on wood and stone...").<sup>10</sup> In his more localized definition, "the Zuni" are focalized, and the mapping materials are accordingly reduced to "maps in songs and prayers, painted on ceramics, and etched in stone."<sup>11</sup> At the same time, the list of subjective operations Enoté ascribes to maps doesn't change, whether the context is global Indigeneity, or more local Zuni "cultural sensibilities." In both definitions, maps function precisely the same way: as agents that "aid," "give," "provide," and "help" relative to their users' needs to remember, to travel, to make intellectual connections, and to understand relationships. Lastly, in both definitions, at both scales, Enoté establishes that the community, the first-person-plural, whether Zuni or Indigenous, has been remapped. In his most recent definition, he removes the signifier *remapped* from quotations, emphasizing its move from jargon to an established signifier.

The transformations and the consistencies between these two definitions are indicative of Enoté's own travels from his home in Zuni Pueblo to global Indigenous communities and back, of the movements through institutional discourses that these travels have necessitated, and of the reflections upon knowledge and Indigenous "cultural landscapes" that these travels have inspired. As Enoté acknowledges in "A:shiwi on A:shiwi/ Zuni on Zuni," his service in the ICMI enlarged his knowledge of mapping at the same time

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Enoté, "A:shiwi," 4. In-text citations for this work follow.

that it sharpened his ability to critically question what he had learned. In Said's terms, Enote gained understanding of differences between cartographic situations, and awareness of his own resistances to certain cartographic theories:

Before serving as Director of the A:shiwi A:wan Museum, I was co-director of the Indigenous Communities Mapping Initiative, providing mapping assistance to indigenous communities in North America and Hawaii. It was during that work that I saw an immense movement among indigenous communities to create maps using computers. I recognize computerized maps are very practical and are a standard within and across many professions. If I ever needed to provide a map in court, in addition to drawing one myself I would probably produce computerized maps because they are so commonly recognized in legal proceedings. But I wonder if computerized mapping and mapping offices could sometimes create unintended gatekeepers for a community's geographic knowledge. What is a map's audience is not familiar with all the lines, numbers, and orientations of computer generated maps? As an artist, albeit an interrupted one, I knew there must be another way to dignify and represent our mother earth. (4-5)

Enote's parsing of different media and applications for maps, and of different authorities, or "gatekeepers," for mapping techniques and mapped information resonates with the critical processes carried out by Momaday and Palmer, as examined in Chapter Two. Momaday, in his travels through the literary world, developed a critical consciousness of the interrelation of "historical and experiential" discourses, and of the circulation of ideas "from the past to the future, from the traditional to the modern and back again."<sup>12</sup> Palmer, in his scholarly work, recognized that "A dichotomy between scientific and Indigenous cartography exists in

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<sup>12</sup> Warrior, *The People*, 178.



the historical literature” that inhibits “Reciprocity between knowledge systems.”<sup>13</sup> Enote, in his practical survey of cartographic techniques, noticed, to paraphrase Edward Said, that no map is exhaustive, and that differences between maps imply different modes of authority. A computerized map could be made, and authorized by the community, but in its computerization, it would have to reference the computer as a theoretical authority—an authority that would not be a “common denominator” in certain local contexts.<sup>14</sup>

Enote’s critical framework is a practical one. Different maps exist for different purposes; maps do not exhaust each other, just as they do not all share the same authorities and histories. Although one map will do where another won’t, maps do not exist dialectically; there is no synthesis, no true map, only an emergence of possibilities for maps, and histories of possible maps. In considering a mapping initiative for Zuni Pueblo, it was decided that what was needed were “maps that would serve as learning tools for the Zuni community.” In this case, histories of possible maps were consulted. Because, as Enote puts it, “the Zuni community is arguably one of the world’s great centers of art, [where] At least one person in practically every household is actively and consistently creating art,” then Zuni art would be the “common denominator” for Zuni mapping (5).

The Zuni Map Art project began with three paintings of “the Zuni Village, Zuni Reservation, and [the] general Zuni region” completed in the late 1990s. These painted maps were printed as posters and “given away free to Zuni households, school classrooms, and tribal programs”(6). As Enote writes, the maps “were so popular a second series was commissioned” depicting numerous sacred sites, including Bandelier National Monument and the Grand Canyon. Three more series have since been completed. One focuses on “a

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<sup>13</sup> Mark Palmer, “Theorizing,” 84-85.

<sup>14</sup> Enote, “A:shiwi,” 5. In-text citations for this work follow.

theme of water and waterways on the Colorado Plateau,” another more deeply examines the Grand Canyon, which is the site of the Zunis’ emergence, and the departure point for their migration to their home on the Colorado Plateau (6).

In analyzing the theories behind Zuni mapping, the scope of the Zuni Map Art project, and the individual maps themselves, I have routinely found myself at a critical impasse, and I have turned to Enote’s text to help me understand my stance in relation to the maps and their cultural contexts. As Enote writes, “These maps are intended for a Zuni audience, but as the [project’s cultural] advisors have pointed out, the maps are also strategic and therefore can serve a powerful role to inspire non-Zuni audiences and awaken awareness of Zuni perspectives” (8). In order to gain a deeper sense of the maps, I viewed them when they were exhibited at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 2013 (they have since been exhibited at the National Museum of the American Indian in New York City). I have also discussed the maps in person at Zuni Pueblo, and by phone, with Jim Enote in 2013 and 2015.

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In conversation, I told Jim that I could not *read* the maps, but rather look at them as paintings. Only in that form could I gauge their compositions, their aesthetic rhythms, the play of motifs, details like the use of brush strokes, perspective, color. In that regard, I said, I was struck by the renderings of water, which I had learned was a particular problem for Western European painters, and was apparently solved during the Renaissance in conjunction with the age of seafaring. In a 2009 map by Geddy Epaloose, entitled *K’ya’na: K’yawakwyana A:dehya (Ojo Caliente)* a turtle appears above and below the surface of a pool of water; the opaque surface bisects the turtle but does not limit visibility of the viewer,

who can see the depth and the lack of depth simultaneously. I found myself, in talking about the paintings, going into these sorts of close observations of aesthetics. Looking back on these conversations, I can see that I was trying to ground myself in what Momaday might call a vessel of ideas.

Jim was careful to stress contexts. The paintings, he imparted to me, were, among other things, a response to image culture. Momaday, in his prologue to *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, declares, “the verbal tradition has suffered a deterioration.”<sup>15</sup> Palmer, in his article, describes “efforts within American Indian and First Nations communities to revitalize language through oral storytelling activities and phonetic spellings of vocabulary words.”<sup>16</sup> Jim framed the issue as a matter of learning through images. The maps would provide images that could work in conjunction with the flood of other images that Zuni children were experiencing through new media. In this context, we discussed Ken Seowtewa’s map *I Remember...* in which the artist maps “where the old wells were located” in the pueblo. I was struck by the didacticism of the painting, and by the nominal association of the painting with memory. In a published, transcribed conversation Seowtewa describes the painting in terms of resource fluctuations of the past and the future:

I would like our young people to know that it was a hard life at that time...nowadays we just turn on the faucet expecting water to flow through. But imagine during a time of drought...not only would our wells and even our river would dry out, we would have springs located within our valley here that people would go over there to get their water...[S]o I want to relate to our children the hard life that our elders had, in a

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<sup>15</sup> Momaday, *Rainy Mountain*, 4.

<sup>16</sup> Mark Palmer, “Theorizing,” 87.

sense fortifying us for the generation to come...[T]he primary thing [of Zuni Map Art] is just a visual learning aid for the next generations to come...<sup>17</sup>

Jim described using the painting in classrooms in Zuni. A major conversation that he and the map artists have with students concerns questions of water, and where students would go to locate water if none was readily available.

In terms of teaching and cultural change, Jim stressed another important detail, namely that the Map Art Project had strengthened the Zunis' relationship with the National Park Service (NPS), with whom the Zuni had to negotiate for access to numerous mapped sites. Given the cordiality of their bureaucratic relationship the NPS asked if they could have any of the Zuni map art for their archives. Upon receiving one of the posters, however, the NPS officers were unsure how to file the document. It was larger than any folding map and more beautiful than any topographical map they had seen. It didn't seem right to fold or roll up the map and then archive it away. This brief anecdote about bureaucratic uncertainty indicates that the mediality of Zuni Map Art is disrupting classification systems, and, as Jim has written, is "challeng[ing] standards and notions that tell us what a map should be."<sup>18</sup>

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It is important to me at this juncture not to do a particular reading of the Zuni maps, nor to analyze them as I would textual objects. I am still developing a critical voice for discussing the maps, and for recounting the conversations that I have had about them. In summarizing the Zuni Map Art project, Enote states, "I believe these maps will lead to new understandings either by formal agreements or simple appreciation of a Zuni worldview."<sup>19</sup> For now I will say that I am one of those who appreciate the Zuni worldview, and that I hope

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<sup>17</sup> Seowtewa, "Artist Statement," 69.

<sup>18</sup> Enote, "A:shiwi," 8.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

the maps will indeed lead to formal agreements and new understandings. I look forward to continuing my conversations about them.

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I want to conclude this project by comparing the methodology of *peacemaking*, as practiced by Jim Enote and the Zuni Map artists, to that of *friendship* as practiced by the Friends of Friendship Park in San Diego and Tijuana. In the case of both parties, border media is being carefully reconsidered in relation to communal needs and diplomatic desires, with a critical sense of historical processes, and of the complicity of media in those processes.

Friends of Friendship Park is confronting the hyperborder in Southern California through an assemblage of medial operations—architectural blueprints, transborder communal gatherings (like the Posada Sin Fronteras, described in the introduction), transence gardening (as described in Chapter Three), photographic documentation, negotiation and lobbying—that are predicated upon the possibility of borders to be media that produce *friends* as political subjects. Friends of Friendship Park works to make borders into communication devices and gathering sites, places where national or cultural differences can be shared and experienced in friendly ways.

Jim Enote and the Zuni Map Artists utilize mapping to control the boundaries of Zuni knowledge systems with an awareness that local, community control of sacred knowledge and historical practices can also connect, through Zuni aesthetics, to open-minded others, to allies and constituents, to those willing to peacefully appreciate the Zuni worldview, and the sovereignty to which it corresponds.

In divergent yet resonant contexts of Zuni Map Art and Friendship Park, border media constitute sites of struggle and of potentiality, in that they index colonial and imperial techniques of power at the same time that they produce the possibility of alternate political subjectivities. Amid the current paradigms of connectivity and security, in which restrictive border media produce controlled but protected citizen subjects, Zuni Map Artists and the Friends of Friendship Park have embraced alternate paradigms of peacemaking and friendship, and are actively exploring the medial conditions for fostering those subjectivities. In the end, this dissertation is intended to give critical support to their efforts.

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